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THE
H E R O I N E,

OR
ADVENTURES

OF
CHERUBINA,

BY
EATON STANNARD BARRETT, ESQ.

“ L'Histoire d'une femme est toujours un Roman.”

Second Edition,

WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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RIGHT HONORABLE

&c. &c. &c.

Sir,

It was the happiness of STERNE to have dedicated his volumes to a PITT. It is my ambition to inscribe this work to you. My wishes would be complete, could I resemble the writer as you do the statesman.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most sincere,
and most humble servant,

E. S. BARRETT.

THE HEROINE TO THE READER.

ATTEND, gentle and intelligent reader; for I am not the fictitious personage whose memoirs you will peruse in “The Heroine;” but I am a corporeal being, and an inhabitant of another world.

Know, that the moment a mortal manuscript is written in a legible hand, and the word End or Finis annexed thereto, whatever characters happen to be sketched in it (whether imaginary, biographical, or historical), acquire the quality of creating and effusing a sentient soul or spirit, which instantly takes flight, and ascends through the regions of air, till it arrives at the

MOON ; where it is then embodied, and becomes a living creature: the precise counterpart, in mind and person, of its literary prototype.

Know farther, that all the towns, villages, rivers, hills, and vallies of the moon, owe their origin, in a similar manner, to the descriptions which writers give of those on earth ; and that all the lunar trades and manufactures, fleets and coins, stays for men, and boots for ladies, receive form and substance here, from terrestrial books on war and commerce, pamphlets on bullion, and fashionable magazines.

Works consisting of abstract argument, ethics, metaphysics, polemics, &c. which, from their very nature, cannot become tangible essences, send their ideas, in whispers, up to the

moon ; where the tribe of talking birds receive, and repeat them for the Lunarians. So that it is not unusual to hear a mitred parrot screaming a political sermon, or a fashionable jay twittering a compiled bravura. These birds then are our philosophers ; and so great is their value, that they sell for as much as your patriots.

The moment, however, that a book becomes obsolete on earth, the personages, countries, manners, and things recorded in it, lose, by the law of sympathy, their existence in the moon.

This, most grave reader, is but a short and imperfect sketch of the way we Moonites live and die. I shall now give you some account of what has happened to me since my coming hither.

It is something more than three lunar hours; or, in other words, about three terrestrial days ago, that, owing to the kindness of some human gentleman or other (to whom I take this occasion of returning my grateful thanks), I became a living inhabitant of the Moon. Like the Miltonic Eve, almost the first thing I did was to peep into the water and admire my face;—a very pretty one, I assure you, dear reader. I then perceived advancing a lank and grimly figure in armour, who introduced himself as Don Quixote; and we soon found each other kindred souls.

We walked, hand in hand, through a beautiful tract of country, called Terra Fertilitatis; for your Selenographers, Langrenus, Florentius, Grimaldus, Ric-

ciolus, and Hevelius, have given proper names to the various portions of our hemisphere.

As I proceeded, I met the Radcliffian, Rochian, and other heroines; but they tossed their heads, and told me pertly that I was a slur on the sisterhood; while some went so far as to say that I had a design upon their lives. They likewise shunned the Edgeworthian heroines, whom they thought too comic, moral, and natural.

I met the Lady of the Lake, and shook hands with her; but her hand felt rather hard from the frequent use of the oar; and I spoke to the Widow Dido, but she had her old trick of turning on her heel, without answering a civil question.

I found the Homeric Achilles broil-

ing his own beefsteaks, as usual; the Homeric Princesses drawing water, and washing linen; the Virgilian Trojans eating their tables; and the Livian Hannibal melting mountains with the patent vinegar of an advertisement.

The little boy in the *Æneid* had introduced the amusement of whipping tops; and Musidora had turned bathing-woman at a halfpenny a dip.

A Cæsar, an Alexander, and an Alfred, were talking politics, and quaffing the Horatian Falernian, at the Garter Inn of Shakespeare. A Cati-line was holding forth on Reform, and a Hanno was advising the recall of a victorious army.

As I walked along, a mob of statesmen, just created by your newspapers, popped up their heads, nodded, and

died. About twenty come to us in this manner, almost every day; and though some of them are of the same name, and drawn from the same original, they are often as unlike each other as so many clouds. The Buonapartes, thus sent, are, in general hideous fellows. However, your parliamentary Reports sometimes agreeably surprize us with most respectable characters of that name.

On my way, I could observe numbers of patients dying, according as the books that had created them were sinking into oblivion. The Foxian James was paraded about in a sedan chair, and considered just gone; and a set of politicians, entitled All the Talents, who had once made a terrible noise among us, lay sprawling in their

last agonies. But the most extensive mortality ever known here was caused by the burning of the Alexandrian Library. This forms quite an æra in the Lunar Annals; and is called The great Conflagration.

I had attempted to pluck an apple from a tree which grew near the road; but instead of a substance, grasped a vacuum; and while Don Quixote was instructing me that this phænomenon arose from the Berkeleian system of immaterialism, and that this apple was only a globular idea, I heard a squeaking voice just beside me cry:

“ I must remark, Madam, that the writer who sent you amongst us, had far too much to say, and too little to do.”

I looked round, but saw nobody.

“ ’Tis Junius,” observed Don

Quixote. "He was invisible on earth, and therefore must be so here. Do not mind his bitter sayings."

"An author," continued the satirist, "who has judgment enough to write wit, should have judgment enough to prevent him from writing it."

"Sir," said Don Quixote, "if, by his works of wit, he can attain popularity, he will ensure a future attention to his works of judgment. So here is at thee, caitiff!" and closing his visor, he ran atilt at pure space.

"Nay," cried Junius, "let us not quarrel, though we differ. Mind unopposed by mind, fashions false opinions, and degenerates from its original rectitude. The stagnant pool resolves into putridity. It is the conflict of the waters which keeps them pure."

“Except in dropsical cases, I presume,” said Tristram Shandy, who just then came up, with his Uncle Toby. “How goes it, heroine? How goes it?—By the man in the moon, the moment I heard of your arrival here, I gave three exulting flourishes of my hand, thus ¹ ² ³ then applying my middle finger to my thumb, and compressing both with the flexory muscles, I shot them asunder transversely; so that the finger coming plump upon the aponeurosis—

* * * *

In short,—for I don’t much like how I am getting on with the description—I snapped my fingers.

“Now, Madam, I will bet the whole of Kristmanus’s, Capuanus’s, Schihardus’s, Phocylides’s and Hanzelius’s

estates,—which are the best on our disk,—to as much landed property as could be spooned into your shoe—that you will get miserably mauled by their reverences, the Reviewers. My life for it, they will say that your character is a mere daub drawn in distemper—the hair too golden—an eyelash too much—then, that the book itself has too little of the rational and argumentative;—that the fellow merely wrote it to make the world laugh,---and, by the bye, to make the world laugh is the gravest occupation an author can chuse. It is no trifle, splitting the sides of people, who are not to live till a thousand years after. In fine, Madam, it will appear that the work has every fault which must convict it Aristotellically and Edinburgo—reviewi-

cally, in the eyes of ninety-nine barbati; but which will leave it not the ninety-ninth part of a gry the worse in the eyes of fifteen millions of honest Britons; besides several very respectable ladies and gentleman yet unborn, and nations yet undiscovered, who will read translations of it in languages yet unspoken. Bless me, what hacking these Critics will have at you! Small sword and broad sword—staff and stiletto—flankonnade and cannonade—hurry-scurry---right wing and left wing——”

But Tristram paused short in consternation; for his animated description of a fight had roused the military spirits of Don Quixote and Captain Shandy, who were already at hard knocks; the one with his spear, and the

other with his crutch. I therefore took this occasion of escaping.

And now day begins to decline ; and your globe, which never sets to us, will soon shed her pale earthshine over the landscape. O how serene, are these regions ! Here are no hurricanes, or clouds, or vapours. Here heroines cannot sigh ; for here there is no air to sigh withal. Here in our great pits, poetically called vallies, we retire from all moonly cares ; or range through the meads of Cysatus or Gruemberget, and luxuriate in the coolness of the Conical Penumbra.

I trust you will feel, dear reader, that you now owe more to my discoveries, than to those of Endymion, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Galileus, and Newton. I pray you, therefore,

reward my services with a long and happy life; though much I fear I shall not obtain it. For, I am told, that two little shining specks, called England and Ireland (which we can just see with our glasses on your globe), are the places upon whose health and prosperity mine must depend. If they fall, I must fall with them; and I fancy they have already seen the best of their days. A parrot informs me, that they are at open war with a prodigious blotch just beside them; and that their most approved patriots daily indite pamphlets to shew how they cannot hold out ten years longer. The Ster-nian Starling assured me just now, that these patriots write the triumphs of their country in the most commiserating language; and portray her dis-

tresses with exultation. Of course, therefore, they conceive that her glories would undo her, and that nothing can save her but her calamities. So since she is the most flourishing nation in the world, I may fairly infer that she is on her last legs.

Before I conclude, I must inform you how I shall have this letter conveyed to your world. Laplace, and other philosophers, have already proved that a stone projected by a volcano, from the moon, and with the velocity of a mile and a half per second, would be thrown beyond the sphere of the moon's attraction, and enter into the confines of the earth's.

Now, hundreds have attested upon oath, that they have seen luminous meteors moving through the sky ;

and falling on the earth, in stony or semimetallic masses. Ergo (say the philosophers), they came all the way from the moon; and the philosophers have a right to say so, for it is thought that they themselves are moonstruck by blows from these very stones.

One of these very stones, therefore, shall convey this letter to you. I have written it on asbestus, in liquid gold (as both these substances are the least consumable by fire); and I will fasten it to the top of a volcanic mountain, which is expected to explode in another hour,

Alas, alas, short-sighted Earthites! how little ye foresee the havock that will happen hereafter, from the pelting of these pitiless stones. For, about

the time of the millennium, the doctrine of projectiles will be so prodigiously improved, that while there is universal peace upon earth, the planets will go to war with each other. Then shall we Lunarians, like true satellites, turn upon our benefactors and instead of merely trying our small shot (as at present), we will fire off whole mountains; while you, from your superior attraction, will find it difficult to hit us at all. The consequence must be, our losing so much weight, that we shall approach, by degrees, nearer and nearer to you; 'till at last, both globes will come slap together, flatten each other out, like the pancakes of Glasse's Cookery, and rush headlong into primeval chaos.

Such will be the consummation of all things. Adieu.

THE HEROINE.



LETTER I.

AH ! my good Governess, guardian of my youth, must I then behold you no more ? No more at breakfast, find your melancholy features shrouded in an umbrageous cap, a novel in the one hand, a cup in the other, and tears springing from your eyes, at the tale too tender, or at the tea too hot ? Must I no longer wander with you through painted meadows, and by purling rivulets ? Motherless, am I to be bereft of my more than mother, at the sensative age of fifteen ? What though papa

caught the Butler kissing you in the pantry? What though he turned you by the venerable shoulder out of his house? I am well persuaded that the kiss was maternal, not amorous, and that the interesting Butler, Simon Snaggs, is your son.

Perhaps you married early in life, and without the knowledge of your parents. A gipsy stole the pretty pledge of your love; and, at length, you have recognized him by some improbable concurrence of events. Happy, happy mother!

Happy too, perhaps, in being cast upon the world, unprotected and defamed; while I am doomed to endure the security of a home, and the dullness of an unimpeached reputation. For me, there is no hope whatever of

being reduced to despair. I am condemned to waste my health, bloom, and youth, in a series of uninterrupted prosperity.

It is not, my friend, that I wish for ultimate unhappiness, but that I am anxious to suffer present sorrow, in order to secure future felicity: an improvement, you will own, on the system of other girls, who, to enjoy the passing moment, run the risk of being wretched ever after. Have not all persons their favourite pursuits in life, and do not all brave fatigue, vexation, and calumny, for the purpose of accomplishing them? One woman aspires to be a beauty, another a title, a third a belle esprit; and to effect these objects, health is sacrificed, reputation tainted, and peace of mind destroyed.

Now my ambition is to be a Heroine, and how can I hope for success in my vocation, unless I, too, suffer privations and inconveniences? Besides, have I not far greater merit in getting a husband by sentiment, adventure, and melancholy, than by dressing, gadding, dancing, and singing? For heroines are just as much on the alert to get husbands, as other young ladies; and in truth, I would never voluntarily subject myself to misfortunes, were I not certain that matrimony would be the last of them. But even misery itself has its consolations and advantages. It makes one, at least, look interesting, and 'affords an opportunity for ornamental murmurs. Besides, it is the mark of a refined mind. Only fools, children, and savages, are happy.

With these sentiments, no wonder I should feel discontented at my present mode of life. Such an insipid routine, always, always, always the same. Rising with no better prospect than to make breakfast for papa. Then 'tis, "Good morrow, Cherry," or "is the paper come, Cherry?" or "more cream, Cherry," or "what shall we have for dinner, Cherry?" At dinner, nobody but a farmer or the parson; and nothing talked but politics and turnips. After tea I am made sing some fal lal la of a ditty, and am sent to bed with a "Good night, pretty miss," or "sweet dear." The Clowns!

Now instead of this, just conceive me a child of misery, in a castle, a convent, or a cottage; becoming acquainted with the hero by his saving

my life—I in beautiful confusion—
“ Good Heaven, what an angel !” cries
he—then sudden love on both sides—
in two days my hand kissed. Embar-
rassments—my character suspected—a
quarrel—a reconciliation---fresh em-
barrassments.—O Biddy, what an irre-
parable loss to the public, that a victim
of thrilling sensibility, like me, should
be thus idling her precious time over
the common occupations of life !—pre-
pared as I am, too, by a five years’ course
of novels (and you can bear witness that
I have read little else), to embody and
ensoul those enchanting reveries, which
I am accustomed to indulge in bed
and bower, and which really constitute
almost the whole happiness of my life.

That I am not deficient in the qua-
lities requisite for a heroine is indis-

putable. I know nothing of the world, or of human nature; I have lived in utter seclusion, and every one says I am handsome. My form is tall and ærial, my face Grecian, my tresses flaxen, my eyes blue and sleepy. Then, not only peaches, roses, and Aurora, but snow, lilies, and alabaster, may, with perfect propriety, be applied to a description of my skin. I confess I differ from other heroines in one point. They, you may remark, are always unconscious of their charms; whereas, I am, I fear, convinced of mine, beyond all hope of retraction.

There is but one serious flaw in my title to Heroine—the mediocrity of my lineage. My father is descended from nothing better than a decent and respectable family. He began life with

a thousand pounds, purchased a farm, and by his honest and disgusting industry, has realized fifty thousand. Were even my legitimacy suspected, it would be a comfort; since, in that case, I should assuredly start forth, at one time or other, the daughter of some plaintive nobleman, who lives retired, and occasionally slaps his forehead.

Another subject perplexes me. It is my name; and what a name—Cherry! It reminds one so much of plumpness and ruddy health. Cherry—better be called Pine-apple at once. There is a green and yellow melancholy in pine-apple, that is infinitely preferable. I wonder whether Cherry could possibly be an abbreviation of CHERUBINA. 'Tis only changing y into ubina, and

the name becomes quite classic. Celestina, Angelina, Seraphina, are all of the same family. But Cherubina sounds so empyrean, so something or other beyond mortality ; and besides I have just a face for it. Yes, Cherubina I am resolved to be called, now and for ever.

But you must naturally wish to learn what has happened here since your departure. I was in my boudoir, reading the *Delicate Distress*, when I heard a sudden bustle below, and “ Out of the house, this moment,” vociferated by my father. The next minute he was in my room with a face like fire.

“ There !” cried he, “ I knew what your famous romances would do for us at last.”

“ Fie !” said I, playfully spreading

my fingers over his face. "Don't frown so, but tell me what these famous romances have done?"

"Only a kissing match between the Governess and the Butler," answered he. "I caught them at the sport in the pantry."

I was petrified. "Dear Sir," said I, "you must surely mistake."

"No such thing," cried he. "The kiss was too much of a smacker for that.—Egad, it rang through the pantry like the smash of twenty plates. But she shall never darken my doors again, never. I have just packed the pair of wrinkled sweethearts off together; and what is better, I have ordered all the novels in the house to be burnt, by way of purification. They talk so much of flames, that I suppose they

will like to feel them." He spoke, and ran raging out of the room.

Adieu, then, ye dear romances, adieu for ever. No more shall I sympathize with your heroines, while they faint and blush, and weep, through four half-bound octavos. Adieu, ye Edwins, Edgars, and Edmunds; ye Selinas, Evelinas, Malvinas: ye inas all adieu! The flames will consume all. The melody of Emily, the prattle of Annette, and the hoarseness of Ugo, will be confounded in one indiscriminate crackle. The Casa and Castello will blaze with equal fury; nor will the virtue of Pamela aught avail to save; nor Wolmar delighting to see his wife in a swoon; nor Werter shelling peas and reading Homer, nor Charlotte cutting bread and butter for the children.

Write to me, my friend, and advise me in this emergency. Alas! I am torn with grief at the destruction of my romances, and the discharge of my loved governess, who was not even permitted to take and receive a hysterical farewell. Adieu.

CHERUBINA.

LETTER II.

A thousand thanks, my dear Governess, for your inestimable letter; and though I must ever regret our separation as the greatest misfortune of my life, yet I cannot but consider it auspicious in this respect, that it has irritated you to inform me of your suspicions respecting my birth.

And so you really think I am not the

daughter of my reputed father, but a child of mystery? Enchanting! And so the hypocrite calls me Cherry Bounce, and all sorts of nicknames behind my back, and often wishes me out of his house? The traitor! Yes, I will comply with his desire, and with your excellent advice, by quitting the iniquitous mansion for ever.

Your letter on the subject reached me just before breakfast. Heavens! how my noble blood throbbed in my veins! What a new prospect of things opened on my soul! I might be an heiress. I might be a title. I might be—— I would not wait to think; I would not wait to bind my hair. I flew down stairs, rushed into the parlour, and in a moment was at the feet of my persecutor. My hands

were folded on my bosom, and my agitated eyes raised to his face.

“ Heyday, Cherry,” said he, laughing, “ this is a new flourish. There, child, now fancy yourself stabbed, and come to breakfast.”

“ Hear me,” cried I.

“ Why, said he, “ you keep your countenance as stiff and steady as the face on our rapper.”

“ A countenance,” cried I, “ is worth keeping, when the features are a proof of the descent, and vindicate the noble birth from the baseness of the adoption.”

“ Come, come,” said he, “ your cup is full all this time.”

“ And so is my heart,” cried I, pressing it expressively.

“ What the mischief can be the

meaning of this mummary?" said he.

"Hear me, Wilkinson," cried the fair sufferer, rising with dignified tranquillity. "Candor is at once the most amiable and the most difficult of virtues; and there is more magnanimity in confessing an error, than in never committing one."

"Confound your written sentences," cried he, "can't you come to the point?"

"Then, Sir," said I, "to be plain and explicit, learn, that I have discovered a mystery in my birth, and that you—you, Wilkinson, are not—— my real Father!"

I pronounced these words with a measured emphasis, and one of my ineffable looks. Wilkinson coloured like scarlet, and stared steadily in my face.

“ Would you scandalize the mother that bore you ?” cried he, fiercely.

“ No, Wilkinson,” answered I, “ but you would by calling yourself the father of her daughter.”

“ And if *I* am not,” said he, “ what must *you* be ?”

“ An illustrious heiress,” cried I, “ snatched from her parents in her infancy ;—snatched by thee, vile agent of the diabolical conspiracy !”

He looked aghast.

“ Tell me then,” continued I, “ miserable man, tell me where my dear, my distracted father lingers out the remnant of his wretched days ? My mother too—or say, am I indeed an orphan ?”

Still he remained mute, and gazed on me with a searching intensity. I raised my voice :

“ Expiate thine offences, restore an outcast to her birthright, make atonement, or *tremble at retribution!*”

I thought the farmer would sink into the ground.

“ Nay,” continued I, lowering my voice, “ think not I thirst for vengeance. I myself will intercede to stay the sword of Justice. Poor wretch! I want not thy blood.”

The culprit was now at the climax of his agony; he writhed through every limb and feature, and by this time had torn the newspaper to tatters.

“ What!” cried I, “ can nothing move thee to confess thy crimes? Then listen. Ere Aurora with rosy fingers shall unbar the eastern gate——”

“ My child, my child, my dear darling daughter!” exclaimed this ac-

complished crocodile, bursting into tears, and snatching me to his bosom, “ what have they done to you? What phantom, what horrid disorder is distracting my treasure?”

“ Unhand me, guileful adulator,” cried I, “ and try thy powers of tragedy elsewhere, for—*I know thee!*” I spoke, and extricated myself from his embrace.

“ Dreadful, dreadful!” muttered he. “ Her sweet senses are lost. My love, my life, do not speak thus to your poor old father.”

“ Father!” exclaimed I, accomplishing with much accuracy that hysterical laugh, which (gratefully let me own) I owe to your instruction; “ Father? Oh, no Sir, no thank you. ’Tis true you have blue eyes like my-

self, but have you my pouting lip and dimple? You have the flaxen hair, but can you execute the rosy smile? Besides, is it possible, that I, who was born a Heroine, and who must, therefore, have sprung from an idle and illustrious family, should be the daughter of a fat funny farmer? Oh, no Sir; no thank you."

The fat funny farmer covered his face with his hands, and rushed out of the room, nor left a doubt of his guilt behind.

You see I relate the several conversations, in a dramatic manner, and word for word, as well as I can recollect them, since heroines do the same. Indeed, I cannot too much admire the fortitude of these charming creatures, who, even while they are in momentary expect-

ation of losing their honors, sit down with the utmost unconcern, and indite the sprightliest letters in the world. They have even presence of mind enough to copy the vulgar dialect, uncouth phraseology, and bad grammar, of villains, who, perhaps, are in the next room to them, and who would not matter annihilating them with a poignard, while they are mending a pen.

Adieu.

LETTER III.

Soon after my last letter, I was summoned to dinner. What heroine in distress but starves? so I sent a message that I was unwell, and then solaced myself with a volume of the

Mysteries of Udolpho, which had escaped the conflagration. Afterwards I flung myself on my bed, in hopes to have dreams portentous of my future fate; for heroines are remarkably subject to a certain prophetic sort of night-mare. You remember the story which Ludovico read, of a spectre that beckons a Baron from his castle in the dead of night, and leading him into a forest, points to its own corpse, and bids him bury it. Well, owing, I suppose, to my having just read this episode, and to my having fasted so long, I had the following dreams.

Methought a delicious odour of viands attracted me to the kitchen, where I found an iron pot upon the fire simmering in unison with my sighs. As I looked at it with a longing eye, the lid began to rise, and I

beheld a half-boiled turkey stalk majestically forth. It beckoned me with its claw. I followed. It led me into the yard, and pointed to its own head and feathers, which were lying in a corner.

What a vulgar, what a disgusting vision, when I ought to have dreamt of nothing but coffins and ladies in black !

At tea (which I could not resist taking, I was so hungry), Wilkinson affected the most tender solicitude for my health ; and as I now watched his words, I could discover in almost all that he said, something to confirm my surmise of his not being my father.

After tea, a letter was handed to him, which he read, and then gave to me. It ran thus :

London.

In accepting your invitation to Sylvan Lodge, my respected friend, I confer a far greater favour on myself, than, as you kindly tell me, I shall on you. After an absence of seven years, spent in the seclusion of a college, and the fatigues of a military life, how delightful to revisit the scene of my childhood, and those who contribute to render its memory so dear! I left you while you were my guardian; I return to you with your assurances that I shall find you a friend. Let me but find you what I left you, and you shall take what title you please.

Yet, much as I flatter myself with your retaining all your former feelings towards me, I must expect a serious alteration in those of my friend Cherry.

Will she again make me her playmate? Again climb my shoulders, and gallop me round the lawn? Are we to renew all our little quarrels, then kiss and be friends? Shall we even recognize each others' features, through their change from childhood to maturity? There is, at least, one feature of our early days, that, I trust, has undergone no alteration—our mutual affection and friendship.

My servant, whom I send forward, takes this letter. At ten to-night I shall see you myself.

Ever affectionately your's,

ROBERT STUART.

To Gregory Wilkinson, Esq.

“There,” cries the farmer, “if I have deprived you of an old woman, I

have got you a young man. Large estates, you know ;—handsome, fashionable ;—come, pluck up a heart, my girl ; ay, egad, and steal one too.”

I rose, gave him one of my ineffable looks, and retired to my chamber.

“ So,” said I, locking my door, and flinging myself on the bed, “ this is something like misery. Here is another precious project against my peace. I am to be forced into marriage, am I ? And with whom ? A man whose legitimacy is unimpeached, and whose friends would certainly consent. His name Robert too :—master Bobby, as the servants used to call him. A fellow that mewed like a cat, when he was whipt. O my Bob ! what a pretty monosyllable for a girl like me to pronounce. Now, indeed, my wretched-

ness is complete ; the cup is full, even to overflowing. An orphan, or at least an outcast ; robbed of my birthright, immured in a farm-house—threatened with a husband of decent birth, parentage and education—my governess gone, my novels burnt, what is left to me but flight ? Yes, I will roam through the wide world in search of my parents ; I will ransack all the sliding pannels and tapestries in Italy ; I will explore Il Castello Di Udolpho, and will then enter the convent of Ursulines, or Carmelites, or Santa della Pieta, or the Abbey of La Trappe. Here I meet with little better than smiling faces and honest hearts. No precious scoundrels are here, no horrors, or atrocities, worth tolerating. But abroad I shall encounter banditti, monks, daggers, racks—

O ye celebrated terrors, when shall I taste of you ?”

I then rose, and stole into Wilkinson's study, in hopes of finding, before my flight, some record or relic that might aid me in unravelling the mystery of my birth. As heroines are privileged to ransack private drawers, and read whatever they find there, I opened his scrutoire, without ceremony. But what were my sensations, when I discovered in a corner of it, an antique scrap of tattered parchment, scrawled all over with this frightful fragment.

This Indenture

For and in consideration of
Doth grant, bargain, release
Possession, and to his heirs and assigns
Lands of Sylvan Lodge, in the
Trees, stones, quarries, &c.

c 2

Reasonable amends and satisfaction

This demise

Molestation of him the said Gregory Wilkinson

The natural life of

Cherry Wilkinson only daughter of

De Willoughby eldest son of Thomas

Lady Gwyn of Gwyn Castle.

O Biddy, does not your blood run cold at this excruciating manuscript? for already you must have decyphered its terrific import. The part lost may be gathered from the part left. In short, it is a written covenant between this Gregory Wilkinson, and the miscreant (whom my being an heiress had prevented from enjoying the title and estate that would devolve to him at my death), stipulating to give Wilkinson "Sylvan Lodge," together with, "trees, stones, quarries, &c." as "reasonable

amends and satisfaction," for being the instrument of my "Demise;" and declaring that there shall be "no molestation of him the said Gregory Wilkinson," for taking away "the natural life of Cherry Wilkinson"—"only daughter of—" somebody "De Willoughby, eldest son of Thomas"—Then follows, "Lady Gwyn of Gwyn Castle." So that it is evident I am a De Willoughby, and related to Lady Gwyn! What perfectly confirms me in the latter supposition is an old portrait which I found soon after, among Wilkinson's papers, representing a young and beautiful female superbly dressed; and underneath, in large letters, the name of, "NELL GWYN."

Distraction! what shall I do? Whither turn? To sleep another night

under the same roof with a wretch, who has bound himself to assassinate me, would be little short of madness. Besides Stuart arrives here to-night ; so, if I remain any longer, I must endure his odious addresses. My plan of escape, therefore, is already arranged, and this very evening I mean to begin my pilgrimage.

The picture and parchment I will keep in my bosom during my journey ; and I will also carry a small bandbox, containing my satin petticoat, satin shoes, a pair of silk stockings, my spangled muslin, and all my jewels. For as some benevolent duchess may possibly receive me into her family, and her son persecute me, I might just as well look decent, you know.

On mature deliberation, I have re-

solved to take but five guineas with me, since more would only make me too comfortable, and tempt me, in some critical moment, to extricate myself from distress.

I shall leave the following billet on my toilet.

To Gregory Wilkinson, Farmer.

Sir,

When this letter meets your eye, the writer will be far, far distant. She will be wandering the convex earth in pursuit of those parents, from whose dear embraces you have torn her. She will be flying from a Stuart, to whose detestable embraces you have destined her.

Your motive for this hopeful match I can guess. As you obtained one pro-

perty by undertaking my death, you are probably promised another on effecting my marriage. Learn that the latter fate has more terrors for me than the former. But I shall escape both.

Alas! Sir, I once doated upon you as the best of fathers. Think then of my consternation at finding you the worst of persecutors. Yet I pity more than hate you; and the first moment of your repentance shall be the last of my animosity.

The much injured,

CHERUBINA DE WILLOUGHBY.

All is prepared, and in ten minutes I commence my interesting expedition. As London is the most approved refuge for distressed Heroines, and the most likely place for obtaining infor-

mation about my birth, I mean to bend my steps thither.

O peaceful shades, why must I leave you? In your retreats I should still find pleasure and repose.

Adieu.

LETTER IV.

THE hail rattled and the wind whistled, as I tied on my bonnet for my journey. With the bandbox under my arm, I descended the stairs, and paused in the hall to listen. I heard a distant door shut, and steps advancing. I sprang forward, opened the door, and ran down the shrubbery.

I then hastened into the road, and

pressed onward with a hurried step, while a violent tempest beat full against my face.

In this manner I walked four long and toilsome miles. At length, finding myself fatigued, I resolved to rest awhile, in the lone and uninhabited house, which lies, you may recollect, on the grey common, about a hundred paces from the road. Besides, I was in duty bound to explore it, as a ruined pile.

I approached. The wind moaned through the broken windows, and the rank grass rustled in the court. I entered. All was dark within; the boards creaked as I trod, the shutters flapped, and an ominous owl was hooting in the chimney. I groped my way along the hall, thence into a parlour—up stairs

and down—not a horror to be found. No dead hand met my left hand; no huge eye-ball glared at me through a crevice. How disheartening!

The cold was now creeping through my veins; my teeth chattered, and my frame shook. I had seated myself on the stairs, and was weeping piteously, wishing myself at home, and in bed, and deploring the dire necessity which had compelled me to this frightful undertaking, when on a sudden I heard the sound of approaching steps. I sprang upon my feet with renovated spirits. Presently several persons entered the hall, and a vulgar accent cried:—

“Jem, run down to the cellar and strike a light.”

“What can you want of me, now

that you have robbed me?" said the voice of a gentleman.

"Why, young man," answered a ruffian, "we want you to write home for a hundred pounds, or some such trifle, which we will have the honour of spending. You must manufacture some confounded good lie about where you are, and why you send for the money; and one of us will carry the letter."

"I assure you," said the youth, "I shall forge no such falsehood."

"As you please, master," replied the ruffian, "but, the money or your life we must have, and that soon."

"Will you trust my solemn promise to send you a hundred pounds?" said the other. "My name is Stuart: I am on my way to Mr. Wilkinson, of

Sylvan Lodge, so you may depend upon my sending you, by his assistance, the sum that you require, and I will promise not to betray you."

"No, curse me if I trust," cried the robber.

"Then curse me if I write," said Stuart.

"Look you, Squire," cried the robber: "we cannot stand parlying with you now; we have other matters on hands. But we will lock you safe in the cellar, with pen, ink, and paper, and a lantern; and if you have not a fine bouncing lie of a letter, ready written when we come back, you are a dead man—that is all."

"I am almost a dead man already," said Stuart, "for the wound you gave me is bleeding torrents."

They now carried him down to the cellar, where they remained a few minutes, then returned, and locked the door outside.

“Leave the key in it,” says one, “for we do not know which of us may come back first.” They then went away.

Now was the fate of my bitter enemy, the wily, the wicked Stuart, in my power; I could either liberate him, or let him perish. It struck me, that to miss such a fruitful interview, would be stupid in the extreme; and I felt a sort of glow at the idea of saying to him, live! Besides he could not possibly recognize me, since I was but eight years old when we saw each other last. So I descended the steps, unlocked the door, and bursting into

the cellar, stood in an unparalleled attitude before him. He was sitting on the ground, and fastening a handkerchief about his wounded leg, but at my entrance, he sprang upon his feet.

“ Away, save thyself !” cried I. “ She who restores thee to freedom flies herself from captivity. Look on these features—Thou wouldest have wrung them with despair. Look on this form—Thou wouldest have prest it in depravity. Hence, unhappy sinner, and learn, that innocence is ever victorious and ever merciful.”

“ I am all amazement !” exclaimed he. “ Who are you ? Whence come you ? Why speak so angrily, yet act so kindly ?”

I smiled disdain, and turned to depart.

“ One moment more,” cried he.

“Here is some mistake, for I never even saw you before.”

“Often, often,” exclaimed I, and was again going.

“So you will leave me, my sweet preserver,” said he, smiling. “Now you have all this time prevented me from binding my wound, and you owe me some compensation for loss of blood.”

I paused.

“I would ask you to assist me,” continued he, “but in binding one wound, I fear you would only inflict another.”

Mere curiosity made me return two steps.

“I think, however, there would be healing in the touch of so fair a hand,” and he took mine as he spoke.

Mere humanity made me kneel

down, and begin to fasten the bandage ; but I resolutely resolved on not uttering another word.

“ What kindness ! ” cried he. “ And pray to whom am I indebted for it ? ”

No reply.

“ At least, may I learn whether I can, in any manner, repay it ? ”

No reply.

“ You will stain your beautiful locks.” said he. “ My blood would flow to defend, but shall not flow to disfigure them. Pray let me collect these charming tresses.”

“ Oh ! dear, thank you, Sir ! ” stammered I.

“ And thank you, ten thousand times,” said he, as I finished my disagreeable task ; “ and now never will I quit you till I see you safe to your friends.”

“ You !” exclaimed I. “ Ah, traitor !”

He gazed at me with a look of pity. “ Farewell, then,” said he : “ ’tis a long way to the next habitation, and should my wound open afresh, and should I faint with loss of blood—”

“ Dear me,” cried I, springing forward, “ let me assist you.”

He smiled. “ We will assist each other,” answered he ; “ and now let us not lose a moment, as the robbers may return.”

He took the lantern to search the cellar for his watch and money. However, we saw nothing there except a couple of portmanteaus, some rusty pistols, and a small barrel, half full of gunpowder. We then left the house ; but had hardly proceeded twenty yards, when he began to totter.

“ I can go no farther,” said he, sinking down. “ I have lost so much blood, that my strength is entirely exhausted.”

“ Pray, dear Sir,” said I, “ exert yourself, and lean on me.”

“ Impossible,” answered he; “ but fly and save your own life.”

“ I will run for assistance,” said I, and flew towards the road, where I had just heard the sound of an approaching carriage. But on a sudden it stopped, voices began disputing, and soon after a pistol was fired. I paused in great terror, for I judged that these were the robbers again. What was I to do? When a heroine is reduced to extremities, she always does one of two things—either faints on the spot, or exhibits energies almost superhuman.

Faint I could not, so nothing remained for me, but energies almost superhuman. I pondered a moment, and a grand thought struck me. Recollecting the gunpowder in the cellar, I flew for it back to the ruin, carried it up to the hall, threw most of it on the floor, and with the remainder, strewed a train, as I walked towards Stuart.

When I was within a few paces of him, I heard quick steps; and a hoarse voice vociferating, "Who goes yonder with the light?" for I had brought the lantern.

"Fly!" cried Stuart, "or you are lost."

I snatched the candle from the lantern, applied it to the train, and the next moment dropped down at the shock of the tremendous explosion that

took place. A noise of falling timbers resounded through the ruin, and the robbers were heard scampering off in every direction.

“There!” whispered I, after a pause; “there is an original horror for you; and all of my own contrivance. The villains have fled, the neighbours will flock to the spot, and you will obtain assistance.”

By this time we heard the people of the carriage running towards us.

“Stuart!” cried I, in an awful voice.

“My name, indeed!” said he. “This is completely inexplicable.”

“Stuart,” cried I, “hear my parting words. *Never again*” (quoting his own letter), “*will I make you my play-mate! never again climb your shoulders, and gallop you round the lawn!*”

Ten o'clock is past. Go not to Sylvan Lodge to-night. She departed two hours ago. Look to your steps."

I spoke this portentous warning, and fled across the common. Miss Wilkinson! Miss Wilkinson! sounded on the blast; but the wretch had discovered me too late. I ran about half a mile, and then looking behind me, beheld the ruin in a blaze. Renovated by the sight of this admirable horror, I walked another hour, without once stopping; till, to my surprise and dismay, I found myself utterly unable to proceed a step farther. This was the more provoking, because heroines often perform journies on foot that would founder fifty horses.

However, I crossed into a field, and contrived to make a nest of hay, where

I remained till day began to dawn. Then, stiff and shivering, I proceeded on my journey; and in a short time, met a little girl with a pail of milk. She consented to let me change my wet dress at her cottage, and conducted me thither.

It was a family of frights. Flat noses and thick lips without mercy. No Annettes and Lubins, or Amorets and Phyllidas, or Florimels and Florellas; no rosy little fatlings, or Cherubim and Seraphim amongst them. However, I slipped on (for *slipping on* is the heroic mode of dressing) my spangled muslin, silk stockings, and satin shoes, and joined their uglinesses at breakfast, resolving to bear patiently with their features.

On the whole, I see much reason to

be pleased with what has happened hitherto. How fortunate that I went to the house upon the common! I see plainly, that if adventure does not come to me, I must go to adventure. And, indeed, I am authorized in doing so by the example of my sister heroines; who, with a noble disinterestedness, are ever the chief artificers of their own misfortunes: for, in nine cases out of ten, were they to manage matters like mere common mortals, they would avoid all those charming mischiefs which adorn their memoirs.

As for this Stuart, I know not what to think of him. I will, however, do him the justice to say, that he has a reputable Roman nose; and although he neither kissed my hand, nor knelt to me, yet he had the decency to talk of

“wounds,” and my “charming tresses.” Perhaps, if he had saved my life, instead of my having saved his; and his name had consisted of three syllables ending in i or o; and, in fine, if he were not an unprincipled profligate, the man might have made a tolerable Hero.

A public coach to London passes shortly, so I shall take a place in it.

Adieu.

LETTER V.

“I SHALL find in the coach,” said I, approaching it, “some emaciated Adelaide, or sister Olivia. We will interchange congenial looks—she will sigh, so will I—and we shall commence a vigorous friendship on the spot.”

Yes, I did sigh; but it was at the

huge and hideous Adelaide that presented herself, as I got into the coach. In describing her, our wittiest novelists would say, that her nose lay modestly retired between her cheeks; that her eyes, which pointed inwards, seemed looking for it, and that her teeth were

“Like angels’ visits; short, and far between.”

She first eyed me with a supercilious sneer, and then addressed a diminutive old gentleman opposite, in whose face Time had ploughed furrows, and Luxury sown pimples.

“And so, Sir, as I was telling you, when my poor man died, I so bemoaned myself, that between swoons and hysterics, I got nervous all over, and was obliged to go through a regiment.”

I stared in astonishment. “What!”

thought I, “a woman of her magnitude and vulgarity, faint, and have nerves? Impossible!”

“Howsomdever,” continued she, “my Bible and my Moll are great consolations to me. Moll is the dearest little thing in the world; as straight as a popular; then such dimples; and her eyes are the very squintessence of perfection. She has all her catechism by heart, and moreover, her mind is uncontaminated by romances and novels, and such abominations.”

“Pray, Ma’am, said I, civilly, “may I presume to ask how romances and novels contaminate the mind?”

“Why, Mem,” answered she tartly, and after another survey, “by teaching little misses to go gadding, Mem, and to be fond of the men, Mem, and of spangled muslin, Mem.”

“ Ma’am,” said I, reddening, “ I wear spangled muslin because I have no other dress : and you should be ashamed of yourself for saying that I am fond of the men.”

“ The cap fits you then,” cried she.

“ Were it a fool’s cap,” said I, “ perhaps I might return the compliment.”

I thought it expedient on my first outset in life to practise apt repartee, and emulate the infatuating sauciness, and elegant vituperation of Amanda, the Beggar Girl, and other heroines ; who, when irritated, disdain to speak below an epigram.

“ Pray, Sir,” said she, addressing our fellow traveller, “ what is your opinion of novels ? An’t they all love and nonsense, and the most impossible lies possible ?”

“ They are fictions, certainly,” said he.

“ Surely, Sir,” exclaimed I, “ you do not mean to call them fictions ?”

“ Why, no,” replied he, “ not absolute fictions.”

“ But,” cried the big lady, “ you don’t pretend to call them true.”

“ Why no,” said he, “ not absolutely true.”

“ Then,” cried I, “ you are on both sides of the question at once.”

He trod on my foot.

“ Ay, that you are,” said the big lady.

He trod on her foot.

“ I am too much of a courtier,” said he, “ to differ from the ladies,” and he trod on both our feet.

“ A courtier !” cried I : “ I should rather have imagined you a musician.”

“ Pray why ?” said he.

“ Because,” answered I, “ you are playing the pedal harp on this lady’s foot and mine.”

“ I wished to produce harmony,” said he, bowing.

“ If you wish it with me,” said I, “ you must confess that novels are more true than histories, because historians often contradict each other, but novelists never do.”

“ Yet do not novelists contradict themselves ?” said he.

“ Certainly,” replied I, “ and there lies the surest proof of their veracity. For as human actions are always contradicting themselves, so those books which faithfully relate them must do the same.”

“ Admirable !” exclaimed he. “ And

yet what proof have we that such personages as Shedoni, Vivaldi, Camilla, or Cecilia, ever existed?"

"And what proof have we," cried I, "that such personages as Alfred the Great, Henry the Fifth, Elfrida, or Mary Queen of Scots, ever existed? Why, Sir, at this rate you might just as well question the truth of Guy Faux's attempt to blow up the Parliament-House, or of my having blown up a house last night."

"You blow up a house!" exclaimed the big lady with amazement.

"Madam," said I, modestly, "I scorn ostentation, but on my word and honour, 'tis fact."

"Of course you did it accidentally," said the gentleman.

"You wrong me, Sir," replied I; "I did it by design."

“ You will swing for it, however,” cried the big lady.

“ Swing for it !” said I ; “ a heroine swing ? Excellent ! I presume, Madam, you are unacquainted with the common law of romance.”

“ Just,” said she, “ as you seem to be with the common law of England.”

“ I despise the common law of England,” cried I.

“ Then I fancy,” said she, “ it would not be much amiss if you were hanged.”

“ And I fancy,” retorted I, nodding at her big figure, “ it would not be much amiss if you were quartered.”

Meantime the gentleman coincided with every syllable that I said, praised my parts and knowledge, and discovered evident symptoms of a discriminating mind, and an amiable heart.

That I am right in my good opinion of him is most certain; for he himself assured me it would be quite impossible to deceive me, I am so penetrating. In short, I have set him down as the benevolent guardian, who is destined to save me several times from destruction.

Indeed he has already done so once; for, when our journey was almost over, he told me, that my having set fire to the ruin might prove a most fatal affair; and whispered that the big lady would probably inform against me. On my pleading the prescriptive immunities of heroines, he solemnly swore, that he once knew a golden-haired, azure-eyed heroine, called Angelica Angela Angelina, who was hanged at the Old Bailey for stealing a broken lute out of a haunted chamber; and

while my blood was running cold at the recital, he pressed me so cordially to take refuge in his house, that I threw myself on the protection of the best of men.

I now write from his mansion in Grosvenor Square, where we have just dined. His name is Betterton; he has no family, but possesses a splendid independence. Multitudes of liveried menials watch his nod; and he does me the honour to call me cousin. My chamber too is charming. The curtains hang quite in a new style, but I do not like the pattern of the drapery.

To-morrow I mean to go shopping; and I may, at the same time, pick up some adventures on my way; for business must be minded.

Adieu.

LETTER VI.

Soon after my last letter, I was summoned to supper. Betterton appeared much interested in my destiny, and I took good care to inspire him with a proper sense of my forlorn and unprotected state. I told him that I had not a friend in the wide world, related to him my lamentable tale, and as a proof of my veracity produced the parchment and the picture.

To my surprise, he said that he considered my high birth improbable; and then began advising me to descend from my romantic flights, as he called them, and to seek after happiness instead of misery.

“ In this town,” continued he, after a long preamble, “ your charms would be despotic, if unchained by legal constraints. But for ever distant from you be that cold and languid tie which erroneous policy invented. For you be the mystic union, whose tie of bondage is passion, the wish the licence, and impulse the law.”

“ Pretty expressions enough,” said I, “ only I cannot comprehend them.”

“ Charming girl!” cried he, while he conjured up a fiend of a smile, and drew a brilliant from his finger, “ accept this ring, and the signature of the hand that has worn it, securing to you five hundred a-year, while you remain under my protection.”

“ Ha, monster!” exclaimed I, “ and is this thy vile design?”

So saying, I flung the ruffian from me, then rushed down stairs, opened the door, and quick as lightning darted along the streets.

At last, panting for breath, I paused underneath a portico. It was now midnight. Not a wheel, not a hoof fatigued the pavement, or disturbed the slumbering mud of the metropolis. But soon steps and voices broke the silence, and a youth, encircling a maiden's waist with his arm, and modulating the most mellifluent phraseology, passed by me. Another couple succeeded, and another, and another. The town seemed swarming with heroes and heroines. "Fortunate pairs!" ejaculated I, "at length ye enjoy the reward of your incomparable constancy and virtue. Here, after a long separation, meeting

by chance, and in extreme distress, ye pour forth your unpolluted souls. O blissful termination of unexampled misery !”

I now perceived, on the steps of a house, a fair and slender form. She was sitting with her elbow in her lap, and her head leaning on one side, within her hand.

“ She seems a congenial outcast,” said I ; “ so, should she but have a Madona face, and a name ending in a, we will live, we will die together.”

I then approached, and discovered a countenance so pale, so pensive, so Roman, that I could almost have knelt and worshipped it.

“ Fair unfortunate,” said I, taking her hand and pressing it ; “ interesting unknown, say by what name am

I to address so gentle a sister in misery.”

“ Eh? What?” cried she, with a voice somewhat coarser than I was prepared to expect.

“ May I presume on my sudden predilection,” said I, “ and inquire your name?”

“ Maria,” replied she, rising from her seat: “ and now I must be gone.”

“ And where are you going, Maria?” said I.

“ To the Devil!” said she.

I started. “ Alas! my love,” whispered I, “ sorrow hath bewildered thee. I am myself a miserable orphan; but happy, thrice happy, could I clasp a sympathetic bosom, in this frightful wilderness of houses and faces, where, alas! I know not a human being.”

“ Then you are a stranger here ?” said she quickly.

“ I am here but a few hours,” answered I.

“ Have you money ?” she demanded.

“ Only four guineas and a half,” replied I, taking out my purse. “ Perhaps you are in distress—perhaps—forgive this officiousness—not for worlds would I wound your delicacy, but if you want assistance——”

“ I have only this old sixpence upon earth,” interrupted she, “ and there ’tis for you, Miss.”

So saying, she put sixpence into my purse, which I had opened while I was speaking.”

“ Generous angel !” cried I.

“ Now we are in partnership, a’nt we ?” said she.

“ Yes, sweet innocent,” answered I, “ we are partners in grief.”

“ And as grief is dry,” cried she, “ we will go moisten it.”

“ And where shall we moisten it, Maria ?” said I.

“ In a public-house,” cried she. “ It will do us good.”

“ O my Maria !” said I, “ never, never !”

“ Why then give me back my sixpence,” cried she, snatching at my purse ; but I held it fast, and, springing from her, ran away.

“ Stop thief, stop thief !” vociferated she.

In an instant, I heard a sort of rattling noise from several quarters, and a huge fellow, called a watchman, came striding out of a wooden box, and grasped me by the shoulder.

“ She has robbed me of my purse,” exclaimed the wily wanton. “ ’Tis a green one, and has four guineas and a half in it, besides a curious old sixpence.”

The watchman took it from me, and examined it.

“ ’Tis my purse,” cried I, “ and I can swear to it.”

“ You lie!” said the little wretch; “ you know well that you snatched it from my hand, when I was going to give you sixpence, out of charity.”

Horror and astonishment struck me dumb; and when I told my tale, the watchman declared that both of us must remain in custody, till next morning; and then be carried before the magistrate. Accordingly, he escorted us to the watchhouse, a room filled with smoke and culprits; where we

stayed all night, amidst a concert of swearing, snoring, laughing, and crying.

In the morning we were carried before a magistrate; and with step superb, and neck erect, I entered the room.

“Pert enough,” said the magistrate; and turning from me, continued his examination of two men who stood near him.

It appeared that one of them (whose name was Jerry Sullivan) had assaulted the other, on the following occasion. A joint sum of money had lately been deposited in Sullivan’s hands, by this other, and a third man, his partner; which sum Sullivan had consented to keep for them, and had bound himself to return, whenever both should go to-

gether to him, and demand it. Some-time afterwards, one of them went to him, and told him that the other, being ill, and therefore unable to come for the money, had empowered him (the partner) to get it. Sullivan, believing him, gave the money, and when he next met the other, mentioned the circumstance. The other denied having authorized the act, and demanded his own share of the deposit from Sullivan, who refused it. Words ensued, and Sullivan having knocked him down, was brought before the magistrate, to be committed for an assault.

“Have you any defence?” said the magistrate to him.

“None that I know of,” answered Sullivan, “only my arm is subject to a

kind of a sort of jerking spasm, ever since I was bewitched by Molly Cranahan the Fairy Woman ; so I do suppose it was a jerking spasm that knocked the man down."

" And is this your defence ?" said the magistrate.

" It is sô," replied Sullivan, " and I hope your worship likes it, as well as I like your worship."

" So we'," said the magistrate, " that I now mean to do you a signal service."

" Why then," cried Sullivan, " the heavens smile on you for a kind gentleman."

" And that service," continued the magistrate, " is to commit you immediately."

" Why then," cried Sullivan, " the

Devil inconvenience you for a big blackguard."

"By your insolence, you should be an Irishman," said the magistrate.

"I was an Irishman forty years ago," replied the other; "and I don't suppose I am any thing else now. Though I have left my country, I scorn to change my birth-place."

"Commit him," said the magistrate.

Just then, a device struck me, which I thought might extricate the poor fellow; so, having received permission, I went across, and whispered it to him.

He half crushed me with a hug, and then addressed his accuser: "Now, Sir, if I can prove to you that I have not broken our agreement about the money, will you promise not to prosecute me for this assault?"

“ With all my heart,” answered the man; “ for if you have not broken our agreement, you must give me the money, which is all I want.”

“ And will your worship,” said Sullivan, “ approve of this compromise, and stand umpire between us?”

“ I have not the least objection,” answered the magistrate; “ for I would rather be the means of your fulfilling an agreement, than of your suffering a punishment.”

“ Well then,” said Jerry to his accuser; “ was not our agreement that I should return the money to yourself and your partner, whenever both of you came together to me, and asked for it?”

“ Certainly,” said the man.

“ And did both of you ever come together to me, and ask for it?”

“ Never,” said the man.

“ Then I have not broken our agreement,” cried Sullivan.

“ But you cannot keep it,” said the man ; “ because you have already given the money away.”

“ No matter,” cried Sullivan, “ provided I have it whenever both of you come together and demand it. But I believe that will be never at all at all, for the fellow who ran off with it won’t much like to shew his face again. So now will your worshipful honor decide ?”

The magistrate, after complimenting me upon my ingenious suggestion, confessed, he said, with much unwillingness, that Sullivan had made out his case clearly. The poor accuser was therefore obliged to abide by his

covenant, and Sullivan was dismissed, snapping his fingers, and offering to treat the whole world with a tankard.

My cause came after, and the treacherous Maria was ordered to state her evidence.

But what think you, Biddy, of my keeping you in suspense till my next letter? The practice of keeping in suspense, so common among novelists, is always interesting, and often necessary. In the Romance of the Highlands, a lady terminates, not her letter, but her life, much in the same style, and with great effect; for when dying, she was about to disclose the circumstances of a horrid murder, which, had she done, not a single incident that afterwards happened, would

then have happened. But fortunately, just as she was on the point of telling all, she chanced to expend her last breath in a beautiful description of the verdant hills, rising sun, all nature smiling, and a few streaks of purple in the east.

Adieu.

LETTER VII.

MARIA being ordered to state her evidence, "That I will," said she.

"I was walking innocently home, from my aunt's, with my poor eyes fixed upon the ground, for fear of the fellows, when what should I see, but this girl, talking on some steps, with a pickpocket, I fancy, 'cause he looked

pretty decent. So I ran past them, for I was so ashamed you can't think ; and this girl runs after me, and says, says she, ' The fellow wouldn't give me a little shilling,' says she, ' so by Jingo, you must,' says she."

" By Jingo! I say by Jingo?" cried I. " St. Catherine guard me! Indeed, your Excellenza, my only oath is Santa Maria."

" She swore at me like a bilking trooper," continued the little imp, " so I pulled out my purse in a fright, and she snatched it from me, and ran away, and I after her, calling stop thief; and this is the whole truth 'pon my honor and word, and as I hope to be married."

The watchman declared that he had caught me running away, that he had

found the purse upon my person, and that Maria had described it, and the money contained in it, accurately.

“ And will your worship,” said Maria, “ ask the girl to describe the sixpence that is in it ?”

The magistrate turned to me.

“ Really,” said I, “ as I never even saw it, I cannot possibly pretend to describe it.”

“ Then I can,” cried she. “ ’Tis bent in two places, and stamped on one of its sides with a D and an H.”

The sixpence was examined, and answered her description of it.

“ The case is clear enough,” said the magistrate, “ so now, Miss, try whether you can advocate your own cause as well as Jerry Sullivan’s.”

Jerry, who still remained in the

room, came behind me, and whispered, "Troth, Miss, I have no brains, but I have a bit of an oath, if that is of any use to you. I would sell my soul to Old Nick out of gratitude, at any time."

"Alas! your Excellenza," said I to the magistrate, "frail is the tenure of that character which has Innocence for its friend, and Infamy for its foe. Life is a chequered scene of light and shade ——"

"Talking of life is not the way to save it," said the magistrate. "Less sentiment and more point, if you please."

I was silent, but looked anxiously towards the door.

"Are you meditating an escape?" asked he.

“ No,” said I, “ but just wait a little, and you shall see what an interesting turn affairs will take.”

“ Come,” cried he, “ proceed at once, or say you will not.”

“ Ah, now,” said I, “ can’t you stop one moment, and not spoil every thing by your impatience. I am only watching for the tall, elegant young stranger, with an oval face, who is to enter just at this crisis, and snatch me from perdition.”

“ Did he promise to come?” said the magistrate.

“ Not at all,” answered I, “ for I have never seen the man in my life. But whoever rescues me now, you know, is destined to marry me hereafter. That is the rule.”

“ You are an impudent minx,”

said the magistrate, “ and shall pay dear for your jocularities. Have you parents ?”

“ I cannot tell.”

“ Friends ?”

“ None.”

“ Where do you live ?”

“ No where.”

“ At least 'tis plain where you will die. What is your name ?”

“ Cherubina.”

“ Cherubina what ?”

“ I know not.”

“ Not know ? I protest this is the most hardened profligate I have ever met. Commit her instantly.”

I now saw that something must be done ; so summoning all my most assuasive airs, I related the whole adventure, just as it had occurred.

Not a syllable obtained belief. The fatal sixpence carried all before it. I recollected the fate of Angelica Angela Angelina, and shuddered. What should I do? One desperate experiment remained.

“ There were four guineas and half a guinea in the purse,” said I to the girl.

“ To be sure there were,” replied she. “ Bless us, how obliging you are to tell me my own news !”

“ Now,” said I, “ answer me at once, and without hesitation, whether is it the half guinea or one of the guineas that is notched in three places, like the teeth of a saw ?”

She paused a little, and looked confused.

“ Nay,” said I, “ no thinking.”

“ I have a long story to tell about those same notches,” said she at length. “ I wanted a silk handkerchief yesterday, so I went into a shop to buy one, and an impudent ugly young fellow was behind the counter. Well, he began ogling me so, I was quite ashamed; and says he to me, there is the change of your two pound note, says he, a guinea and a half in gold, says he, and you are vastly handsome, says he. And there are three notches in one of the coins, says he; guess which, says he, but it will pass all the same, says he, and you are prodigious pretty, says he. So indeed, I was so ashamed, that though I looked at the money, and saw the three notches, I have quite forgotten which they were in—guinea or half guinea; for my sight

spread so, with shame at his compliments, that the half guinea looked as big as the guinea; and I frowned so, you can't think. And I am sure, I never remembered to look at the money since; and this is the whole truth, I pledge you my credit and honour, and *by the immaculate Venus*, as the gentlemen say."

The accusing witness who insulted the magistrate's bench with the oath, leered as she gave it in; and the recording clerk, as he wrote it down, drew a line under the words, and pointed them out for ever.

"Then you saw the three notches?" said I.

"As plain as I see you now," replied she, "and a guilty poor object you look."

“ And yet,” said I, “ if his Worship will try, he will find that there is not a single notch in any one of the coins !”

“ ’Tis the case indeed,” said the magistrate, after accurately examining them.

Then turning to me, “ Your conduct, young woman, is unaccountable : but as your accuser has certainly belied herself, she has probably belied you. The money, by her own account, cannot be her’s, but as it was found in your possession, it may be your’s. I therefore feel fully justified in restoring it to you, and in acquitting you of the crime laid to your charge.”

I received the purse, gave Maria back her sixpence, and hurried out of the room.

Jerry followed me.

“Why then,” cried he, shaking me heartily by the hand, as we walked along, “only tell me how I can serve you, and ’tis I that will; though, to be sure, you must be the greatest little reprobate (bless your heart!) in the three kingdoms.”

“Alas!” said I, “you mistake my character. I am no reprobate, but a heroine—the proudest title that can adorn a woman.”

“I never heard of the title before,” said Jerry, “and I warrant ’tis no better than it should be.”

“You shall judge for yourself,” said I. “A heroine is a young lady, rather taller than usual, and often an orphan; at all events, with the finest eyes in the world. She blushes to the

tips of her fingers, and when mere misses would laugh, she faints. Besides, she has tears, sighs, and half sighs, at command; can live a month on a mouthful, and is addicted to the pale consumption."

"Why then, much good may it do her," cried Jerry; "but in my mind, a tisicky girl is no great treasure; and as to the fashion of living a month on a mouthful, let me have a potatoe and chop for my dinner, and a herring at nights, and I would not give a farthing for all the starvation you could offer me. So when I finish my bit of herring, wife says to me, winking, 'a fish loves water,' says she, and immediately she fetches me a dram."

"These are the delights of vulgar life," said I. "But to be thin, inno-

cent, and lyrical ; to bind and unbind her hair ; in a word, to be the most miserable creature that ever augmented a brook with tears, these, my friend, are the glories of a heroine.”

“ Famous glories, by dad ! ” cried Jerry ; “ but as I am a poor man, and not over particular, I can contrive to make shift with health and happiness, and to rub through life without binding my hair. — Bind it ? by the powers, ’tis seldom I even comb it.”

As I was all this time without my bonnet (for in my hurry from Betterton’s I had left it behind me), I determined to purchase one. So I went into a shop, and asked for an interesting and melancholy turn of bonnet.

The woman looked at me with some surprise, but produced several ; and I

fixed upon one which resembled a bonnet that I had once seen in a picture of a wood nymph. So I put it on me, wished the woman good morning, and was walking away.

“ You have forgotten to pay me, Miss,” said she.

“ True,” replied I, “ but I will call another time. Adieu.”

“ You shall pay me, however,” cried she, ringing a bell, and a man entered instantly from an inner room.

“ Here is a hussey,” exclaimed she, “ who refuses to pay me for a bonnet.”

“ My sweet friend,” said I to her, “ a distressed heroine, which I assure you, I am, runs in debt every where. Besides, as I like your face, I mean to implicate you in my plot, and make you one of the *dramatis personæ* in the

history of my life. Probably you will turn out to be my mother's nurse's daughter. At all events, I give you my word I will pay you at the *denouement*, when the other characters come to be provided for; and meantime, to secure your acquaintance, I must insist on owing you money."

"By dad," said Jerry, "that is the first of all ways to lose an acquaintance."

"The bonnet or the money!" cried the man, stepping between me and the door.

Jerry jumped forward, and arrested his arm. "Hands off, bully," cried the shopman.

"No, in troth," said Jerry; "and the more you bid me, the more I won't let you go."

“Do you want to rob me?” cried the shopman.

“If her ladyship has set her heart on a robbery,” said Jerry, “I am not the man to baulk her fancy. Sure, didn’t she save me from a gaol? And sure, wouldn’t I help her to a bonnet? A bonnet? ’Pon my conscience, she shall have half a dozen. ’Tis I that would not mind being hanged for her!”

So saying, he snatched a parcel of bonnets from the counter, and was instantly knocked down by the shopman. He rose, and both began a furious conflict. In the midst of it, I was attempting to rush from the shop, when I found my spangled muslin barbarously grasped by the woman, who tore it to pieces in the struggle; and pulling off the bonnet, pushed me into

the street, just as Jerry had stunned his adversary with a blow. Taking this opportunity of escape, he dragged me through several streets without uttering a word.

At length I was so much exhausted, that we stopped; and strange figures we looked. Jerry's face was smeared with blood, nothing was on my head: my long locks were hanging loose about me, and my poor spangled muslin was all in rags.

"Here," said Jerry to an old woman who sold apples at a corner, "take care of this young body, while I fetch her a coach." And off he ran.

The woman looked at me with a suspicious eye, so I resolved to gain her good opinion. It struck me that

I might extract pathos from an apple, and taking one from her stall, "An apple, my charming old friend," said I, "is the symbol of discord. Eve lost Paradise by tasting it, Paris exasperated Juno by throwing it."——A burst of laughter made me turn round, and I perceived a crowd already at my elbow.

"Who tore her gown?" said one.

"Ask her spangles," said another.

"Or her hair," cried a third.

"'Tis long enough to hang her," cried a fourth.

"The king's hemp will do that job for her," added a fifth.

A pull at my muslin assailed me on the one side, and when I turned about, my hair was thrown over my face on the other.

I was just beginning to cry, when a butcher's boy advanced: "Will your ladyship," said he, "permit me to hand you into that there shop?"

I bowed assent, and he led me, nothing loath. Peals of laughter followed us.

"Now," said I as I stood at the door, "I will reward your gallantry with half a guinea."

As I drew forth my money, I saw his face reddening, his cheeks swelling, and his mouth pursing up.

"What sensibility!" said I, "but positively you must not refuse this trifle."

He took it, and then just think, the brute laughed in my face!

"I will give this guinea," cried I, quite enraged, "to the first who chastises that ungrateful!"

Hardly had I spoken, when he was laid prostrate. He fell against the stall, upset it, and instantly the street was strewn with apples, nuts, and cakes. He rose. The battle raged. Some sided with him, some against him. The furious stall-woman pelted both parties with her own apples; while the only discreet person there was a ragged little girl, who stood laughing at a distance, and eating one of the cakes.

In the midst of the fray, Jerry returned with a coach. I sprang into it, and he after me.

“The guinea, the guinea!” cried twenty voices at once. At once twenty apples came rattling against the glasses.

“Pay me for my apples!” cried the woman.

“ Pay me for my windows !” cried the coachman.

“ Drive like a devil,” cried Jerry, “ and I will pay you like an emperor !”

“ Much the same sort of persons, now-a-days,” said the coachman, and away we flew. The guinea, the guinea ! died along the sky. I thought I should drop with laughter.

I write from Jerry’s house, where I have taken refuge for the present.

I am extremely distracted, I assure you.

Adieu.

LETTER VIII.

JERRY SULLIVAN is a petty woollen-draper in St. Giles's, and occupies the lower floor of a small house. At first his wife and daughter eyed me with some suspicion ; but when he told them how I had saved him from ruin, they became very civil, and gave me a tolerable breakfast. Soon afterwards I threw myself on a bed, and slept several hours.

I woke with pains in all my limbs ; but anxious to forward the adventures of my life, I rose, and called mother and daughter on a consultation about my dress. As my spangled muslin was in ruins, they furnished me with

the best of their wardrobe. I bargained to give them two guineas; and I then began equipping myself.

While thus employed, I heard the voices of husband and wife in the next room, rising gradually to the matrimonial key. At last the wife exclaims,

“ A Heroine? I will take my corpular oath, there is no such title in all England; she’s a fragrant impostume and if she has the four guineas, she never came honestly by them; so the sooner she parts with them the better; and not a step shall she stir in our clothes till she launches forth three of them. So that’s that, and mine’s my own, and how do you like my manners, Ignoramus?”

“ How dare you call me Ignoramus?” cried Jerry. “ Blackguard if

you like, but no ignoramus, I believe. I know what I could call you, though."

"Well?" cried she, "well? saving a drunkard and a scold, what else can you call me?"

"I won't speak another word to you," said Jerry. "I would not speak to you, if you were lying dead in the kennel."

"Then," cried she, "you're an ugly unnatural beast, so you are; and your Miss is no better than a bad one, so she is; and I warrant you understand one another well, so you do!"

This last insinuation was perfectly sufficient for me. What! remain in a house where suspicion attached to my character? What! act so diametrically, so outrageously contrary from the prin-

ciple of aspersed heroines, who are sure on such occasions to pin up a bundle, and set off? I spurned the puny notion, and resolved to decamp instantly. So having hastened my toilette, I threw three guineas on the table, and then looked for a pen and ink, to write a sonnet. I could find nothing, however, but a bit of chalk, and with this substitute, I scratched the following lines upon the wall.

S O N N E T,

To J. Sullivan, on leaving his House.

As some deputed angel downward steers,
His golden wings, with glittering nectar dew'd;
Mid firmamental wilds and radiant spheres,
To starless tracts of black infinitude——

Here the chalk failed me, and just
at the critical moment; for my simile

had also failed me, nor could I have ever gotten beyond infinitude. I got to the hall-door, however, and without fear of being overheard : to such an altitude of tone had ribaldry arisen between husband and wife, who were now contesting a most delicate point—which of them had beaten the other last.

“ I know,” cried Jerry, “ that I gave you the last blow.”

“ Then take the first now,” cried his wife, as I shut the door.

Anticipating that I should probably have occasion for Jerry's services again, I marked the number of his house, and then hastened along the street. It was swarming and humming like a hive of bees, and I felt as if I could never escape alive out of it. Here a carriage

almost ran over me ; there a sweep brushed against me. “ Beauty ! ” cried a man like a monkey, and chucked my chin, while a fellow with a trunk shoved me aside.

The shops soon attracted my attention, and I stopped to look at some of them. You cannot conceive any thing more charming: Turkish turbans, Indian shawls, pearls, diamonds, fans, feathers, laces ; all shewn for nothing at the windows. Alas ! I had but one guinea remaining !

At length I reached an immense edifice, which appeared to me the castle of some Marquis or Baron. Ponderous columns supported it, and statues stood in the niches. The portal lay open. I glided into the hall: As I looked anxiously around, I beheld a cavalier

descending a flight of steps. He paused, muttered some words, laid his hand upon his heart, shook his head, and advanced.

I felt instantly interested in his fate; and as he came nearer, perceived, that surely never lighted on this orb, which he hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. His form was tall, his face oval, and his nose aquiline. Once more he paused, frowned, and waving his arm, exclaimed, with an elegant energy of enunciation ;

“If again this apparition come, he may approve our eyes, and speak to it.”

That moment a pang, poignant, but delicious, transfixed my bosom. Too well I felt and confessed it the dart of love. In sooth, too well I knew that

my heart was lost to me for ever. Silly maiden! But fate had decreed it.

I rushed forward, and sank at the feet of the stranger.

“Pity and protect a destitute orphan!” cried I. “Here, in this hospitable castle, I may hope for repose and protection. Oh, Signor, conduct me to your illustrious mother, the Baroness, and let me pour into her ear my simple and pathetic tale.”

“O ho! simple and pathetic!” cried he. “Come, my dear, let me hear it.”

I seated myself on the steps, and told my whole story. During the recital, the noble youth betrayed extreme sensibility. Sometimes he turned his head aside to conceal his emotion; and sometimes stifled a hysterical laugh of agony.

I ceased, he heaved a profound sigh, and begged to know whether I was quite certain that I had ten thousand pounds in my power;—I replied, that as Wilkinson's daughter, I certainly had; but that the property must devolve to some one else, as soon as I should prove myself a nobleman's daughter."

He then made still more accurate inquiries about it; and having satisfied himself:

"Beshrew my heart!" exclaimed he; "but I will avenge your injuries; and ere long you shall be proclaimed and acknowledged the Lady Cherubina De Willoughby. Meantime, as prudence demands that you should lie concealed from the search of your enemies, hear the project which I pro-

pose. I lodge in Drury-lane, an obscure street; one apartment of the house is unoccupied, you can hire it, and remain there, a beautiful recluse, till fortune and my indefatigable efforts shall rescue from oppression the most enchanting of her sex."

He spoke, and seizing my hand, carried it to his lips.

"What!" cried I, "do you not live in this castle, and are you not its heir?"

"This is no castle," said he, "but Covent Garden Theatre."

"And you?" asked I with anxiety.

"Am an actor," answered he.

"And your name?"

"Is Abraham Grundy."

"Then, Mr. Abraham Grundy, allow me to have the satisfaction of wishing you a very good evening."

“Stay!” cried he, detaining me, “and you shall know all. My extraction is illustrious, and my real name Lord Altamont Mortimer Montmorenci. But, like you, I am enveloped in a cloud of mysteries. Hereafter I will acquaint you with the most secret particulars of my life; but at present you must trust to my truth. Truth is the tie which binds society together, and those who have honour themselves, are ever forward to confide in the—in the—the—”

“Amiable Montmorenci!” exclaimed I, giving him my hand, “I repose implicit credence in your disclosure, and I throw myself on your protection.”

“Now,” said he, “you must pass at these lodgings as my near relation, or they will not admit you.”

At first, I hesitated at deviating from veracity; but soon consented, on recollecting, that though propriety makes heroines begin with praising truth, necessity makes them end with being the greatest story-tellers in the world.

During our walk to the lodgings, Montmorenci instructed me how I should play my part. On our arrival, he introduced me to the landlady, who was about fifty, and who looked as if the goddess of fasting had bespoken her for a handmaid.

With an amiable effrontery, and a fine easy flow of falsehood, he told her, as we had concerted, that I was his second cousin, and an orphan; and that I had come to Town for the purpose of procuring, by his interest, an appointment at the Theatre.

The landlady said she would move

heaven and earth, and her own bed, for so good a gentleman; and then consented to give me her sleeping-room on the lower floor, at some trifle or other, —I forget what. I have also the use of a parlour adjoining it. There is, however, nothing mysterious in these chambers, but a dark closet belonging to the parlour, whither I may fly for refuge, when pursued by my persecutors.

Thus, my friend, the plot of my history begins to take a more interesting shape, and a fairer order of misfortune opens upon me. Trust me, there is a taste in distress as well as in millinery. Far be from me the loss of eyes or limbs, the sufferings of the pillory, or the grossness of a jail-fever. I would be sacrificed to the lawless, not to the

laws; dungeoned in the holy Inquisition, not clapped into Bridewell; and recorded in a Novel, not in the Newgate Calender.

Yes, my Biddy, sensations hitherto unknown now heave my bosom, vary the carnation of my cheeks, and irradiate my azure eyes. I sigh, gaze on vacancy, start from a reverie; now bite, now moisten my lip, and pace my chamber with unequal steps. Too sure I am deeply, distractedly in love, and Altamont Mortimer Montmorenci is the first of men.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

THE landlady, his Lordship, and another lodger, are accustomed to dine in common; and his lordship persuaded me to join the party. Accordingly, just as I had finished my last letter, dinner was announced; so I tripped up stairs, and glided into the room. You must know I have practised tripping, gliding, flitting, and tottering, with great success. Of these, tottering ranks first, as it is the approved movement of heroic distress.

“ I wonder where our mad poet can be?” said the hostess; and as she spoke, an uncouth figure entered, muttering in emphathic accents :—

“ The hounds around bound on the sounding ground.”

He started at seeing me, and when introduced by his Lordship, as Mr. Higginson, a fellow-lodger, and a celebrated poet, he made an unfathomable bow, rubbed his hands, and reddened to the roots of his hair.

This personage is tall, gaunt, and muscular; with a cadaverous countenance, and smutty hair hanging in strait strings. He seems to be one of those men who spend their lives in learning how the Greeks and Romans lived; how they spoke, dressed, ate; what were their coins and houses, &c.; but neglect acquainting themselves with the manners and customs of their own times. Montmorenci tells me that his brain is affected by excessive study; but that his manners are harmless.

At dinner, his Lordship looked all,

said all, did all, which conscious nobility, united with ardent attachment, could inspire in a form unrivalled, and a face unexcelled. I perceived too that the landlady regarded him with eyes of tender attention, and languishing allurements, but in vain.

As to Higginson, he did not utter a word during dinner, except asking for a bit of *lambkin*; but he preserved a perpetuity of gravity in his face, and stared at me the whole time, with a stupid and reverential fixedness. When I spoke, he stopped in whatever attitude he happened to be; whether with a glass at his mouth, or a fork half lifted to it.

After dinner, I proposed that each of us should relate our histories; an useful custom established by heroines, who

seldom fail of finding their account in it, and discovering either a grandmother or a murder. Thus too, the confession of a monk, the prattle of an old woman, or the half-eaten words of a parchment, are the certain forerunners of virtue vindicated, vice punished, rights restored, and matrimony made easy.

The landlady was asked to begin.

“ I have nothing to tell of myself,” said she, “ but that my mother left me this house, and desired me to look out for a good husband, Mr. Grundy; and I am not as old as I look; for I have had my griefs, as well as other folks, and every tear adds a year, as they say; and ’pon my veracity, Mr. Grundy, I was but thirty-two last month. And my bitterest enemies never impeached

my character, that is what they did'nt, nor could'nt ; they dare'nt to my face. I am a perfect snowdrop for purity. Who presumes to go and say that a lord left me an annuity or any such abomination? Who, I ask? The wretches! But I got a prize in the lottery. So this is all I can tell of myself; and, Mr. Grundy, your health, and a good wife to you, Sir."

After this eloquent morsel of biography, I requested that Higginson would recount his adventures; and he read a sketch, which was to have accompanied a volume of poems, only unfortunately the booksellers refused to publish either. I copy it for you,

MEMOIRS OF JAMES HIGGINSON,

BY HIMSELF.

“ OF the lives of poets, collected from posthumous record, and oral tradition, as little is known with certainty, much must be left to conjecture. He, therefore, who presents his own memoirs to the public, may surely merit the reasonable applause of all, whose minds are emancipated from the petulance of envy, the fastidiousness of hypercriticism, and the exacerbation of party.

“ I was born in the year 1771, at 24, Swallow Street; and should the curious reader wish to examine the mansion, he has every thing to hope from the alert urbanity of its present

landlord, and the civil obsequiousness of his notable lady. He who gives civility, gives what costs him little, while remuneration may be multiplied in an indefinite ratio.

“ My parents were reputable tobacconists, and kept me behind the counter, to negotiate the titillating dust, and the tranquillizing quid. Of genius, the first spark which I elicited, was my reading a ballad in the shop, while the woman who sold it to me was stealing a canister of snuff. This specimen of mental abstraction shewed that I would never make a good tradesman ; but it also evinced that I would make an excellent scholar. A tutor was accordingly appointed for me ; and during a triennial course of study, I had passed from the insipidity of the

incipient *hic, hæc, hoc*, to the music of a Virgil, and to the thunder of a Demosthenes.

“ Debarred by my secluded life from copying the polished converse of high society, I have at least endeavoured to avoid the vulgar phraseology of low ; and to discuss the very weather with polysyllabical ratiocination.

“ For illustrations of my juvenile character, recollection affords me but small materiality. That I have always disliked the ceremony of diurnal ablution, and a hasty succession of linen, is a truth, which he who has a sensitive texture of skin will readily credit ; which he who will not credit, may, if he pleases, deny ; and may, if he can, controvert. Life, among its quiet blessings, can boast of few things more

comfortable than indifference towards dress.

“ To honey with my bread, and to apple-sauce with my goose, I have ever felt a romantic attachment, resulting from the classical allusions which they inspire. That man is little to be envied, whose honey would not remind him of the Hyblean honey, and whose apple-sauce would not suggest to him the golden apple.

“ But notwithstanding my cupidity for such dainties, I have that happy adaptation of taste, which can banquet, with delight, upon hesternal offals; can nibble ignominious radishes, or masticate superannuated mutton.

“ My first series of teeth I cut at the customary time, and the second succeeded them with sufficient punc-

tuality. This fact I had from my mamma.

“ My first poetical attempt was an epitaph on the expiration of my tutor.

EPITAPH.

Here lies the body of John Tomkins, who
Departed this life, aged fifty-two ;
After a long and painful illness, that
He bore with Christian fortitude, tho’ fat.
He died lamented deeply by this poem,
And all who had the happiness to know him.”

“ The first Latin verse which I ever composed was this :

“ Fert roseos rores oriens Aurora per oras.

“ And my tutor assured me that it was the most roaring line in the world.

“ These compositions my father did not long survive ; and mamma, to

the management of the business feeling quite unequal, relinquished it altogether, and retired with the respectable accumulation of a thousand pounds.

“ I still pursued my studies, and from time to time accommodated confectionaries and band-boxes with printed sheets, which the world might have read, had it pleased, and might have been pleased with, had it read.

“ On a pretty little maid of mamma’s, I made my next poetical effort, which I present to the reader.

TO DOROTHY PULVERTAFT.

If Black-sea, White-sea, Red-sea ran
One tide of ink to Ispahan ;
If all the geese in Lincoln fens,
Produc’d spontaneous, well-made pens ;
If Holland old, or Holland new,
One wond’rous sheet of paper grew ;

Could I, by stenographic power,
Write twenty libraries an hour ;
And should I sing but half the grace
Of half a freckle on thy face ;
Each syllable I wrote, should reach
From Inverness to Bognor's beach ;
Each hairstroke be a river Rhine,
Each verse an equinoctial line.

“ Of the girl, an immediate dismissal ensued ; but for what reason, let the researches of future biographers decide.

“ At length, having resolved on writing a volume of Eclogues, I undertook an excursion into the country to learn pastoral manners. An amputated loaf, and a contracted Theocritus, constituted my companions.

“ In vain I questioned the youths and maidens about their *Damons* and *Delias* ; their *Dryads* and *Hama-dryads* ; their *Amabœan* contentions

and amorous incantations. When I talked of Pan, they asked me if it was a pan of milk; when I requested to see the pastoral pipe, they shewed me a pipe of tobacco; when I spoke of satyrs with horns, they bade me go to the husbands; and when I spoke of fawns with cloven heel, they bade me go to the Devil. I met wrinkled shepherdesses, and humpy milkmaids: I recumbed on a bank of cowslips and primroses, and my features were transpierced by wasps, and ants, and nettles. I fell asleep under sunshine, and awoke under a torrent of rain. Dripping and disconsolate, I returned to my mamma, quaffed some whey; and since that misadventurous perambulation have never ruralized again. To him who subjects himself to a recurrence

of disaster, the praise of boldness may possibly be accorded, but the praise of prudence must certainly be denied.

“ A satirical Bucolic, however, was the fruit of this expedition. It is entitled *Antiquated Amours*, and is designed to shew that passions which are adapted to one time of life appear ridiculous in another. The reader shall have it.

ANTIQUATED AMOURS.

AN ECLOGUE.

’Tis eve. The sun his ardent axle cools
In ocean. Dripping geese shake off the pools.
An elm men’s shadows measure by the sun ;
The shattered leaves are rustling as they run ;
While two antiques, a bachelor and maid,
Sit amorous under an old oaken shade.
He (for blue vapours damp the scanty grass)
Strews fodder underneath the hoary lass ;

Then thus,—O matchless piece of season'd clay,
'Tis Autumn, all things shrivel and decay.

Yet as in withered Autumn, charms we see,
Say, faded maiden, may we not in thee?

What tho' thy cheek have furrows? ne'er de-
plore;

For wrinkles are the dimples of threescore :
Come then, age urges, hours have winged feet,
Ah ! press the wedding ere the winding sheet.

To clasp that waist enwrap in silken fold,
Of woof purpureal flowered with radiant gold :
Then, after stately kisses, to repair
That architectural edifice of hair,
These, these are blessings.—O my grey de-
light,

O venerable nymph, O painted blight,
Give me to taste of these. By Heaven above,
My members tremble less with years than love ;
Tho', while my husky whispers creak uncouth,
My words flow unobstructed by a tooth.
Come then, age urges, hours have winged feet,
Ah ! press the wedding ere the winding sheet.

Come, thou wilt ne'er provoke crimconic law,
Nor lie, maternal, on the pale-eyed straw.

Come, and in formal frolic interwine,
The braided silver of thy hair with mine.
Then sing some bibulous and leering glee,
And quaff the grape upon my pranksome knee.
The wine loquacious let no brook dilute;
'Tis drinking water makes the fishes mute.
Come then, age urges, hours have winged feet;
Ah! press the wedding, ere the winding sheet.

Thin as the spectre of a famished eel,
He spoke, and coughing shook from head to
heel.

Sharpening the blunted glances of her eyes,
The virgin a decrepid ogle plies.
Then stretches unused simpers, which shew
plain

Her passion, and some teeth that still remain.

Innocent pair! But now the rain begins,
So both knot kerchiefs underneath their chins,
And homeward haste. Such loves our Poet
wrote,

In the patch'd poverty of half a coat;
Then diadem'd with quills his brow sublime,
Magnanimously mad in mighty rhyme.

“ Whether the public will admire my works, as much as my mamma does, far be from me to determine. If they cannot boast of wit and judgment, to the praise of truth and modesty they may at least lay claim. To be unassuming in an age of impudence, and veracious in an age of mendacity, is to combat with a sword of glass against a sword of steel; the transparency of the one may appear more beautiful than the opacity of the other; yet let it be recollected, that the transparency is accompanied with brittleness, and the opacity with consolidation.”

This evidence of a perverted intellect being read, my turn came next, and I repeated the fictitious tale that Montmorenci had taught me. He con-

firmed it; and when asked to relate his own life, gave us, with great taste, such a natural narrative of a man living on his wits, that any one who knew not his noble origin must have believed it.

Soon afterwards he repaired to the Theatre, and as I was now alone with Higginson, I determined to discover his real character; for his countenance belies his memoirs, and bespeaks the villain. Should he prove one, he may conduce to the horror and romance of my story.

“Your life, Mr. Higginson,” said I, “has not near so much of the terrible in it, as I had expected from your appearance; for, to do you justice, you have a most fatal face—pale and grim to a degree.”

“Madam,” returned he, with evident agitation, “my mamma says of my face, that though not regularly handsome, ’tis extremely interesting.”

“Why now,” cried I, “instead of the Hesperian curls, and slender eyebrows of a lover, have you not the bushy overshadowing eyebrows, and lank, raven hair of an assassin? Nay, start not, but answer me candidly—for upon my honour you may find your account in it;—can you handle a dagger?”

“Dear, dear, dear!” muttered he, and made a precipitate retreat from the room.

As sure as fate, the man is an assassin.

Adieu.

LETTER X.

THIS morning, soon after breakfast, I heard a gentle knocking at my door, and, to my great astonishment, a figure, cased in shining armour, entered. Oh, ye conscious blushes, it was my Montmorenci! A plume of white feathers nodded on his helmet, and neither spear nor shield were wanting.

“ I come,” he cried, bending upon one knee, and taking my hand; “ I come in the ancient armour of my family, to perform my promise of recounting my melancholy memoirs.”

“ My lord,” said I, “ rise and be seated. Cherubina knows how to appreciate the honour that Montmorenci confers.”

He bowed; and having laid aside his spear, shield, and helmet, he placed himself by me on the sofa, and began his interesting history.

“ All was dark. The hurricane howled, the wet rain fell, and the thunder rolled in an awful and Ossianly manner.

“ On a beetling rock, lashed by the Gulph of Salerno, stood Il Castello di Grimgothico.

“ My lads, are your carbines charged, and your sabres sharpened ?” cried Stiletto.

“ If they an’t, we might load our carbines with this hail, and sharpen our sabres against this northwind,” cried Poignardi.

“ The wind is east-south-east,” cried Daggeroni.

“ At that moment the bell of Grim-gothico tolled one. The sound vibrated through the long corridors, the spiral staircases, the suites of tapestried apartments, and the ears of the personage who has the honour to address you. Much alarmed, I started from my couch ; but conceive my horror when I beheld my chamber filled with banditti ! They were sent by Napoleon (that awful oddity) to dispatch me, because of my glorious struggle against him in Italy.

“ Snatching my faulchion, I flew to the armoury for my coat of mail. The bravos rushed after me ; but I fought and dressed, and dressed and fought, till I had perfectly completed my unpleasing toilette.

“ Alack ! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than a twenty of their swords.”

“ To describe the contest that followed, were beyond the pen of an Anacreon. The bullets flew round me, thick as hail,

“ And whistled as they went for want of thought.”

“ At length I murdered my way down to my little skiff, embarked in it, and arrived at this island. As I first touched foot on its chalky beach, ‘Hail, happy land,’ cried I, ‘hail, thrice hail!’

“ There is no hail here, Sir,’ said a child running by; but come with me, and I will shew you a wedding.’

“ And who are to be married?’ asked I, lifting the little innocent in my arms.

“ The Marquis de Furioso, and the Lady Sympathina, daughter to Baron

Hildebrand,' answered little Billy. ' Love is a primary principle, inculcated on the human heart, and consubstantiated with our beings.' And so saying, he playfully belaboured me with an infinitude of small thumps.

" Happy childhood!—Ah, if when vitiated by the vile world, man, miserable man, could recall—recall—poo! But to continue:

" As I walked towards the chapel, my heart dilated at beholding the picturesque scenery around. On the left were plantations of tufted turnips, on the right the venerable grandeur of a dilapidated dog-kennel, and every where the eye caught monstrous mountains, and minute daisies; while groups of children and chickens added hilarity to the landscape. Rural beauties elevate

the soul to virtue, and virtue alone is true nobility.

“ At length I reached the chapel, and found the ceremony about to begin. But I must describe Lady Sympathina. Perhaps her face was not perfect, but it was more—it was interesting, it was oval. Her eyes were of the real, original, old blue, and her eyelashes of the best silk. The roses of York and Lancaster united in her cheek, and a nose of the Grecian order surmounted the whole. She was habited in white drapery. Ten signs of the Zodiac, worked with spangles, sparkled over it; but Virgo was omitted at her own desire, and the bridegroom stipulated to dispense with Capricorn. Sweet delicacy!

“ And now the ceremony had commenced, and was passing off with great

spirit, till, in an evil moment, the bride happened to glance at me. I stood leaning on my sword. Seducing sweetness dwelled in my smile. She shrieked, turned pale : ‘ *Comment vous portez vous,*’ cried she, as she rushed into my astonished arms, with distracted tresses, and a look that would have shocked the Humane Society.

“ This, this is he,’ she cried, ‘ who hath nightly haunted my dreams. This, this is my destined husband. Marquis De Furioso, never will I wed thee!’

“ Flattered by her preference, I deposited a kiss on her cheek, and a blush was the rosy result. I therefore repeated the application. The domestics tore her from me. ‘ To arms!’ cried the Mareschal: little Billy began screaming prodigiously for an urchin

of his age, and the Marquis De Furioso, bowing gracefully to the bride, stabbed himself to the heart.

“ The bride was carried off in a swoon, and from continual weeping, fell ill of an inverted eyelash.

“ Meantime I was hurried from the chapel, and conveyed to the spectral chamber, where I strained my left leg in the composition of an extatic ode.

“ One night I had thrown myself on the bed, to draw upon the contemplation of future misfortune for a supply of that melancholy which my immediate exigencies demanded, when to my particular consternation, a winged eyeball began flying about my face.

“ Say little foolish fluttering thing.”

“ Much disconcerted, I walked to the

glass, and was sleeking my slender brow with my finger, when lo! an impertinent apparition peeped over my shoulder, and made faces at me. I felt offended, and determined on asserting my dignity.

“Is it not enough,” said I, with an elevated voice, ‘to be harassed by beings of this life, but those of the life to come must interfere? *En verité*, I would advise a certain inhabitant of a certain world (not the best, I fancy), to think less of my affairs, and more of his own.’

“The ghost looked confused, and adopted invisibility.

“At that moment a sudden thought struck me.

“Let me escape!” said I.

“Gods, what a thought was there!”

“ I then contrived this ingenious mode of accomplishing my object. My chamber had a window. I opened it, and got out at it. During eighteen months afterwards, I wandered about the country, an itinerant beggar; for Napoleon had confiscated all my patrimony.

“ One day, the cattle lay panting under the broad umbrage; the sun had burst into an immoderate fit of splendour, and the struggling brook chided the matted grass for obstructing it. I sat beside a hedge, and began eating wild strawberries; when lo! a form, flexile as the flame that ascends from a censer, and undulates with the sighs of a dying vestal, flitted inaudible by me, nor crushed the daisies as it trod. What a divinity! she was fresh as the Anadyomene of Apelles, and beautiful

as the Gnidus of Praxitiles, or the Helen of Zeuxis. Her eyes, which were sky-blue—”

“ Sir,” said I, “ you need not mind her eyes: I dare say they were blue enough. But pray now, who was this immortal doll of your’s?”

“ Who!” cried he. “ Why who but—shall I speak it? Who but—the LADY CHERUBINA DE WILLOUGHBY!”

“ I?”

“ You!”

“ Ah, Montmorenci!”

“ Ah, Cherubina! I followed you with cautious steps,” continued he, “ till I traced you into your—you had a garden, had you not?”

“ Yes.”

“ Into your garden. I thought ten

thousand flowers would have leapt from their beds to offer you a nosegay.

“ You disappeared, I was quite *au desespoir*, and next morning resumed my station at a corner of the garden.”

“ At which corner ?” asked I.

“ Why really,” said he, “ I cannot explain ; for the place was then novel to me, and the ground was covered with snow.”

“ With snow !” cried I. “ Why I thought you were eating wild strawberries only the day before.”

“ I ? Sure you mistake.”

“ I declare most solemnly you told me so.”

“ Oons, Madam, I said no such thing.”

“ Sir, I must remark that your manners—”

“ Now, by St. Bryde of Bothwell, I did say so, sure enough, and I did eat wild strawberries too; but they were *preserved* wild strawberries. I had gotten a crock of them from a nun, who was opening oysters in a meadow for a hysterical butcher; and her knife having snapt asunder, I lent her my sword; so, out of gratitude, she made me a present of the preserves. By the bye they were mouldy.

“ One morning, as I sat at the side of the road, asking alms, some provincial players passed by. I accosted them, and offered my services. In short, they took me with them; I performed, was applauded: and at length my fame reached London, where I am at present acting understrappers wonderfully well, considering my genealogy.

“ You may now wish to learn what has become of the personages mentioned in this narrative. The Baron Hildebrand still paces his chamber, and his eyebrows have gotten a portentous trick of meeting together. The Lady Sympathina remains immured in the northern turret. Little Billy died with the Bible before him, so the Coroner’s Inquest brought in a verdict of Lunacy. Stiletto is dead, Poignardi is no more, Daggeroni has departed this life, and the rest of the bandits are in another, and I trust a better world.

“ I shall conclude my tale with a moral remark, founded on circumstantial evidence—that to suffer is an attribute of mortality.

“ But wherefore,” cried he, “ wherefore talk of the past? Oh! let me

tell you of the present and of the future. Oh ! let me tell you, how dearly, how deeply, how devotedly I love you !”

“ Love me !” cried I, giving such a start as the nature of the case required. “ My lord, this is so—really now, so—”

I remained silent, and with the elegant embarrassment of modesty, cast my blue eyes to the ground. I never looked so lovely.

“ But I go !” cried he, springing on his feet. “ I fly from you for ever ! No more shall Cherubina be persecuted with my hopeless love. Yet, Cherubina ! Cherubina ! I will teach the songsters of the grove to articulate ; and the hills and the vallies to echo Cherubina ! Cherubina !

“ I will turn hermit on Mount Caucasus, and I call all the stars of respectability to witness the vow. Then, Lady Cherubina,” and he stopped short before me; “ then, when maddened and emaciated, I shall pillow my haggard head on a hard rock, and lulled by the hurricanes of Heaven, shall sink into the sleep of the grave.”—

“ Dear Montmorenci !” said I, quite overcome, “ live for my sake—as you value my—friendship,—live.”

“ Friendship !” echoed he. “ Oh ! Cherubina, oh ! my soul’s precious treasure, say not that chilling word. Say hatred, disgust, horror ; any thing but friendship.”

“ What shall I say ?” cried I, inefably affected, “ or what shall I do ?”

“ What you please,” muttered he,

looking wild and pressing his forehead.

“ My brain is on fire. Hark ! chains are clanking—save me, Cherubina, save me, save me ! Ha ! she frowns at me—she darts at me—she pierces my heart with an arrow of ice ! ”

He threw himself on the floor, groaned grievously, and tore his hair. I was horror-struck.

“ I declare,” said I, “ I would say any thing upon earth to relieve you ;—only tell me what.”

“ Angel of light ! ” exclaimed he, springing upon his feet, and beaming on me a smile that might liquefy marble. “ Have I then hope ? Dare I pronounce the divine words—she loves me ? ”

“ I will not be angry,” murmured I, while the chamber swam before me.

He took both my hands in his own, pressed them to his forehead and lips, and leaned his burning cheek upon them. Then encircling my waist with his arm, he drew me to his heart. It was Cherubina's hand that fell on his shoulder, it was Cherubina's tress that played on his cheek, it was Cherubina's sigh that breathed on his lip.

“Moment of a pure and exquisite emotion!” cried he. “Now to die would be to die most blest!”

Suddenly he caught me under the chin, and kissed me. I struggled from him, and sprang to the farther end of the room; while my neck and face burst into a glow of indignation.

“Really,” said I, panting with passion, “this is so unprovoked, so presuming.”

He cast himself at my feet, execrated his folly, and besought my pardon.

“ I fancy, my lord,” said I, “ you will find, that as far as a kiss on the hand, Heroines have no particular objection. But a salute on the lips is considered inaccurate. My lord, on condition that you never repeat that liberty, here is my hand.”

He snatched it with ardor, and strained it to his throbbing bosom.

“ And now,” cried he, “ make my happiness complete, by making this hand mine for ever.”

On a sudden an air of grandeur involved my form. My mind, for the first time, was called upon to reveal its full force. It felt the solemnity of the appeal, and triumphed in its conscious ability.

“ What !” exclaimed I, “ can’st thou

suppose the poor orphan Cherubina so destitute of principle and of pride, as to intrude herself unknown, unowned, unfriended, mysterious in her birth, and degraded in her situation, on the illustrious and Italian house of Montmorenci?

“ Here then I most inviolably vow never to wed, till the mystery which hangs over my birth be developed.”

As soon as I had made this fatal vow, his lordship fell into the most afflicting agonies and attitudes.

“ Oh !” cried he, “ to be by your side, to see you, touch you, talk to you, love you, adore you, and yet find you lost to me for ever. Oh, ’tis too much, much too much !”

“ The milliner is here, Miss,” said the maid, tapping at the door.

“ Bid her call again,” said I; but as I spoke, in she came, with a charming assortment of bonnets and dresses.

“ We will talk over the matter another time,” whispered I to his lordship.

His lordship declared that he would drop dead that instant.

The milliner declared that she had brought the newest patterns.

“ On my honour,” said I to his lordship, “ you shall finish this scene to-morrow morning, if you wish it.”

“ You may go and be——Heigho!” said he, suddenly checking himself. What he was about to say, I know not; something mysterious, I should think, by the knitting of his brows. However, he snatched his spear, shield, and helmet; made a low bow, laid his

hand on his heart, and stalked out of the chamber. Interesting youth!

I then ran in debt for some millinery, drank hartshorn, and chafed my temples.

I think I was right about the kiss. I confess I am not one of those girls who try to attract men by permitting liberties ; and who thus excite passion at the expence of respect. Indeed, had I not been fortified by the precedent of other heroines, I should actually have felt, and I fear did feel, even the classical embrace of clasping to the heart too great a freedom. But I am certain I shall never attain hardihood enough to ravish a salute from a man's mouth, as the divine Heloise did ; who once ran at St. Preux, and astonished him with the most balmy and

remarkable kiss upon record. Poor fellow ! he was never the same after it.

I must say too, that Montmorenci did not shew much judgment in urging me to matrimony, before I had undergone adventures for four volumes. Because, though the heroic etiquette allowed me to fall in love at first sight, and confess it at second sight, yet it would not authorize me to marry myself off, without agony and interruption. Even the ground must be lacerated, before it will bring forth fruits ; and often we cannot reach the lovely violet, till we have torn our hands with brambles.

I met his lordship again at dinner ; which we had almost finished, before the poet made his appearance, and his bow. His bow was as usual, but his appearance was oddly altered. His hair

stood in stiff ringlets on his forehead, and he had pruned his bushy eyebrows, till hardly one bristle remained; while a pair of white gloves, small enough for myself, were forced upon his hands. He glanced at us with a conscious eye, and hurried to his seat.

“Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, by Jupiter!” exclaimed Montmorenci. “Why, Higginson, how shameful for the mice to have nibbled your eyebrows, while Apollo Belvidere was curling your hair!”

“I will tell my mamma of you!” cried the poet, half rising from his chair.

Now this mamma is an old bed-ridden cripple in one of the garrets. However, I pacified him so successfully by praising his Hesperian curls, that he

consented not to lodge the complaint. An assassin! Ah, no. The hideous innocent would plunge into the ocean to save a drowning fly.

After dinner I requested ten pounds from his Lordship for the purpose of paying the milliner. Never was regret so finely pictured in a face, as in his, while he swore he had not a penny upon earth. Indeed, so graceful was his lamentation, so interesting his penury, that though the poet stole out of the room for ten pounds, which he slipped into my hand, I preferred the refusal to the donation.

Yes, this amiable young nobleman increases in my estimation every moment. Never can you catch him out of a classical position. He would exhaust, at one sitting, all the attitudes

of all the statues ; and when he talks tenderness, he brings in his heart with great effect. Then, too, his oaths are well conceived, and elegantly exprest. Thunderbolts and the fixed stars are ever at his elbow, nor can any man sink himself to perdition with so picturesque a frown. And yet sometimes his imprecations——

But my paper is almost filled.

O I could write of him, talk of him, think of him, hour after hour, minute after minute ; even now, while the shadows of night are blackening the blushes of the rose, till dawn shall stain with her ruddy fire, the snows of the naked Appennine ; till the dusky streams shall be pierced with darts of light, and the sun shall quaff his dewy beverage from the cup

of the tulip and the chalice of the lily.

Adieu.

LETTER XI.

“It is my lady, O it is my love!” exclaimed Lord Altamont Mortimer Montmorenci, as he flew like a winged Mercury, into my apartment this morning. A rap at the door checked his eloquence, and spoiled a most promising posture.

My door was then thrown open, and who should waddle into the room, but fat Wilkinson!

My first feeling (could you believe it?) was of gladness at seeing him; nor had I presence of mind enough, either to repulse his embrace, or utter a

piercing shriek. Happily my recollection soon returned, and I flung him from me.

“Cherry,” said he, “dear Cherry, what have I done to you, that you should use me thus? Was there ever a wish of your heart left ungratified by me? And now to desert me in my old age! Only come home with me, my child, only come home with me, and I will forgive you all.”

“Wilkinson,” said I, “this interview must be short, pointed, and decisive. As to calling yourself my father, that is a stale trick, and will not pass; and as to personating (what I perceive you aspire to) the grand villain in my Memoirs, your corpulency, pardon me, puts that out of the question for ever. Ah! no, Sir, you are not at all a real villain. You are only a

sleek, good-humoured, chuckle-headed schemer. For instance, you never murdered me, though you stipulated to do so fourteen years ago. Remain then, what nature made you ; return to your plough ; mow, reap, fatten your pigs and the parson ; but never again attempt to get yourself thrust into the pages of a romance.”

Disappointment and consternation imprinted his thick features with more angles than I thought practicable. The fact is, he had never imagined that my notions of what villains ought to be were so refined ; and that I have formed my taste in these matters upon the purest models.

As a last effort of despair, the silly man flung himself on his knees before me, and grasping both my hands, looked up in my face with such an implor-

ing expression, while the silent tears rolled down his cheeks, that I confess I was a little moved; and at the moment fancied him sincere.

“Now, goodness bless thee,” said he, at length; “goodness bless thee, for these sweet tears of thine, my daughter!”

“Tears!” cried I, quite shocked.

“Yes, darling,” said he, “and now with this kiss of peace and love we will blot out all the past.”

I shrieked, started from my seat, and rushed into the expanded arms of Montmorenci.

“And pray, Sir, cried Wilkinson, advancing fiercely, “who are you?”

“A lodger in this house, Sir,” answered his lordship, “and your best friend, as I trust you will acknowledge hereafter. I became acquainted with

this lady at the table of our hostess ; and learned from her 'that she had left your house in disgust. Yesterday morning, on entering her apartment, to make my respects, I found an old gentleman there, one Doctor Merrick, whom I recognized as a wretch of infamous character.

Sir, I was present at a trial, where the American Ambassador prosecuted him for stealing ag' olden tweezer-case ; and where a flaw in the indictment saved his life, as he proved the stolen article a golden tooth-pick case.

Being well acquainted with this young lady's high respectability, I presumed to warn her against such a dangerous companion ; when I found, unfortunate girl ! that she had already promised her hand to him in marriage."

Wilkinson groaned : I stared.

“Once apprised of his character,” continued Montmorenci, “the lady was willing enough to drop the connection; but unhappily, the ruffian had previously procured a written promise of marriage from her, which he now refuses to surrender; and at the moment you came, I was consulting with your daughter on what should be done.”

“Lead me to the villian,” cried Wilkinson, “and I will shew you what should be done!”

“I have already appointed an interview with him,” said his Lordship; “but as your feelings might probably prompt you to too much warmth, perhaps you had better not accompany me. However, should I fail in persuading him to resign the fatal paper, you shall then see him yourself.”

“You are a fine fellow!” cried the

farmer, shaking his hand, "and have made a friend of me for ever."

"I will hasten to him now," said his Lordship; and with a significant glance towards me, went away, leaving me quite astonished, both at his story, and his motive for fabricating it. However, my business was to support the deception.

Wilkinson then told me that he learned my residence in London from the discharged Butler, who had heard it from you. The wretch made the disclosure for forty guineas; and Wilkinson says that he wants to marry you, merely for your annuity. Ah! how unlike the disinterested Montmorenci; who would rather marry me, at this moment, as plain, plebeian Cherry Wilkinson, with my paltry ten thousand pounds, than wait till I am the

acknowledged Lady Cherubina De Willoughby, with all my restored estates.

Biddy, Biddy ! if you knew as much of the world as I do, a fortune-hunter would not impose upon you.

But to return. In the midst of our conversation, the maid brought me this note.

“ Will my soul’s idol forgive the tale I told Wilkinson, since it was devised in order to save her from his fangs ? This Doctor Merrick, whom I mentioned to him, keeps a private mad-house. I have just seen him, and informed him that I am about to put a lunatic gentleman, my honoured uncle, under his care. I told him, that this dear uncle (who, you may well suppose, is Wilkinson) has lucid intervals ;

that his madness arose from grief at an unfortunate amour of his daughter's ; that he fancies every man he sees is attached to her, and has her written promise of marriage ; and that the first demand he makes of every stranger, is to give him the paper containing it.

“Now, my love, let not a lurking kindness, which I fear you still retain for Wilkinson, prevent you from joining in this plot against him. Indeed, to confine him is an act of humanity ; because if the ruffian be suffered to walk at large, he will probably (since he now knows that his designs are discovered) contrive to have you assassinated. With this conviction on my mind, I must declare, that if you betray my scheme to him, I shall feel myself perfectly justified in prosecuting him

for a conspiracy against your life, and having him hanged.

Ever, ever, ever,

Your

MONTMORENCI.

P. S. Excuse tender language, as I am in haste.

This advice my prudence induced me to adopt, and my desire of saving Wilkinson from an ignominious end; for unfortunately, such is my weakness, that I cannot divest myself of all my former feelings towards him. Nay, even when he presented me, during our conversation, with a hundred pounds, to purchase baubles, as he said, and reward me for my promises of discarding the Doctor, I thanked him with as much gratitude as if I had not known that he gave the money merely to de-

coy me home again, and perhaps imprison me for ever.

Soon afterwards, our hero returned, and told us that his interview had proved unsuccessful; so it was determined that the whole party should repair to the Doctor's, and make another attempt. Accordingly, off we set in a hired coach, and on our arrival were shewn into a parlour. After some minutes of anxious suspense, the Doctor, a shrivelled little figure, entered with two servants.

Wilkinson being introduced, the Doctor commenced operations, by trying the state of his brain.

“Any news to-day, Mr. Wilkinson?” said he.

“Very bad news for me, Sir,” replied Wilkinson, sullenly.

“ I mean public news,” said the Doctor.

“ A private grievance ought to be considered of public moment,” said Wilkinson.

“ Well remarked, Sir,” cried the Doctor, “ a clear-headed observation as possible. I give you credit. Sir, if you continue to talk so rationally, you will not remain long in my house, I promise you.”

“ I am sorry,” replied Wilkinson, “ that talking rationally is the way to get turned out of your house, because I have come for the purpose of talking rationally. I believe, Doctor, I talk rationally when I say, that it is the duty of every man to rescue his fellow-creature from misery.”

“ Few sentiments,” answered the

Doctor, "could do more honour both to your head and to your heart."

"I believe too," resumed Wilkinson, "it is the duty of a parent to consult the happiness of his child. Is that talking rationally, eh?"

"Clearly so," said the Doctor. "'Tis a corollary from your first proposition."

"Why then, I have you in a fine quandary!" cried Wilkinson. "For since my child feels unhappy at having given you the paper containing her promise of marriage, it is my duty, by your own admission, to get this paper out of your hands. Aha, I have you there, I think. Egad, I have you there. An't that talking rationally, eh?"

"So far from it," said the Doctor, "that if you ask for the paper again, I must be under the disagreeable neces-

sity of punishing you most severely. To be candid, Sir, I must handcuff you."

"Od's bobs, and bobbin, and bon-bobbin, and bonbobinet!" shouted Wilkinson, with a yell of laughter. "Handcuff me? Great, very great! Any thing more, my fine fellow?"

"And as often as you persist in asking for the paper," said the Doctor, "I must—excuse me—I must have you plied with exemplary horsewhippings."

"Why, you ruffian!" cried Wilkinson, as he marched up, shaking his head, and clapping his hands to his sides; "I will ask you for it ten thousand times over and over. Give me the paper, give me the paper, give me the paper, the paper, the paper, the paper, paper, paper, paper! Confound you, you shall have a quire of it at once!"

“ This is indeed a bad case,” said the Doctor.

“ Case ?” exclaimed Wilkinson. “ Is it a golden tweezer-case, eh ? Or a golden tooth-pick case, eh ? or a case where you were near being hanged by the American Ambassador, eh ? There are cases for you, my old buck !”

“ Madder, and madder, I protest,” whispered the Doctor.

“ O you withered wasp, O you uncommon weasel !” cried Wilkinson, “ how could the girl ever bring herself to fancy you ? A fellow, by all that is horrid, as ugly as if he were bespoke : an old fellow, too, and twice as disgusting, and not half so interesting, as a monkey in a consumption !”

“ Perfectly distracted, ’pon my conscience !” muttered the Doctor. “ Here, John, Tom, secure the wretch this moment.”

Wilkinson instantly darted at the Doctor, and knocked him down. The servants collared Wilkinson, who called to Montmorenci for assistance ; but in vain ; and after a furious scuffle, the farmer was handcuffed.

“ Dear uncle, calm these transports !” said his Lordship. “ Your dutiful and affectionate nephew beseeches you to compose yourself.”

“ Uncle !—nephew !” cried the farmer. “ What do you mean, fellow ? Who the devil is this villain ?”

“ Are you so far gone as not to know your own nephew ?” said the Doctor, grinning with anger.

“ Never set eyes on the poltroon till an hour ago !” cried Wilkinson.

“ Merciful powers !” exclaimed Montmorenci. “ And when I was a

baby, he dandled me ; and when I was a child, he gave me whippings and sugar-plums ; and when I came to man's estate, he cherished me in his bosom, and was unto me as a father !”

“ Curse me, but the wretch is crazed !” cried Wilkinson.

“ No, dear uncle,” said Montmorenci, “ but you are shockingly crazed ; and to be candid with you, this is a madhouse, and this gentleman is the mad-doctor, and with him you must now remain, till you recover from the most afflicting attack of insanity that ever visited a country gentleman.”

“ Insanity !” faltered the farmer, turning deadly pale.

“ You are the maddest man that ever bellowed in Bedlam,” said the Doctor.

“ Mad ! I mad ! ” cried Wilkinson. “ I vow to my veracity, Doctor, that I was always reckoned the quietest, merriest, sweetest—sure every one knows honest Greg Wilkinson, and his bottle of claret. Don’t they, Cherry ? Dear child, answer for your father. Am I mad ? Am I, Cherry ? ”

“ As butter in May,” said Montmorenci.

“ You lie like a thief ! ” vociferated the farmer, struggling and kicking. “ You lie, you sneering, hook-nosed reprobate ! ”

“ Why, my dear uncle,” said Montmorenci, “ don’t you recollect the night you began jumping like a grasshopper, and scolding the full-moon in my deer-park ? ”

“ Your deer-park ? I warrant you are not worth a cabbage-garden ! But

now I see through the whole plot. Ay, I am to be kept a prisoner here, while my daughter marries that old mummy before my face. It would kill me, Cherry; I tell you I should die on the spot. Oh, my unfortunate girl, are you too conspiring against me? Are you, Cherry? Dear Cherry, speak. Only say you are not!"

"Indeed, my friend," said I, "you shall be treated with mildness. Doctor, I beg you will not act harshly towards him. Notwithstanding all his faults, the man is goodnatured and well tempered, and to do him justice, has always used me kindly."

"Have I not?" cried he. "Sweet Cherry, beautiful Cherry, blessings on you for that!"

"Come away," whispered Montmorenci hastily.

“Farewell, Doctor,” said I. “Adieu, poor Wilkinson.”

“For pity’s sake, stay five minutes!” cried Wilkinson, struggling with the servants.

“Come, my love!” whispered Montmorenci.

“Only one minute—one short minute!” cried the other.

“Well,” said I, stopping, “one minute then.”

“Not one moment!” cried his Lordship, and was hurrying me away.

“My child, my child!” shrieked Wilkinson, with a tone of such indescribable agony, as made my blood curdle in my veins.

“Dear Sir,” said I, returning; “you know well I am not your child.”

“You are,” cried he. “By all that

is just and good, you are my own, own child."

"By all that is just and good," exclaimed Montmorenci to me, "you shall come away this instant, or remain here for ever." And he dragged me out of the room.

"Now then," said the poor prisoner bursting into tears, as the door was closing, "now do what you please with me, for my heart is quite broken!"

I too began crying; nor for many minutes could Montmorenci reason me out of my folly. Yet, after all, I am not so very, very blameable. Were a wretch going to the gallows, I could not help feeling for him. How much more then must I feel for a man, who, villain as he indisputably is, had acted

as a parent towards me, during fifteen years of my life.

On our way home, I shewed the hundred pounds to Montmorenci, whose joy at this seasonable acquisition was truly friendly. I purchased a charming scarf, a shawl, a bonnet, two dresses, and a pair of pearl earrings. His Lordship borrowed a guinea from me, and with it bought a little casket, which he instantly presented to me in the handsomest manner.

Adieu.

LETTER XII.

ON my first arrival at these lodgings, I sent the servant to Betterton's house, for the bandbox which I had left behind, the night I fled from him.

To my amazement, who should enter

my room, this morning, but Betterton himself! I dropped my book. He bowed to the dust.

“Your business, Sir?” said I.

“To make a personal apology,” answered he, “for the disrespectful treatment which the loveliest of her sex experienced at my house.”

“An apology for one insult,” said I, “must seem insincere, when the mode adopted for making it, is another insult!”

“The retort is exquisitely elegant,” answered he, “but I trust, not true. For, granting that I offered a second insult by my intrusion, still I may lessen the first so much by my apology, that the sum of both may be less than the first, as it originally stood.”

“Really,” said I, “you have blended politeness and arithmetic so happily

together; you have clothed multiplication and subtraction in such polished phraseology—”

“Good!” cried he, “that is real wit.”

“You have added so much algebra to so much sentiment—” continued I.

“Better, still better!” interrupted he again.

“In a word, you have apologized so gracefully by the rule of three, that I know not which has assisted you the most—Chesterfield or Cocker.”

“Inimitable,” exclaimed he. “Really your retorting powers are superior to those of any heroine on record.”

In short, my friend, I was so delighted with my repartee, that I could not, for my life, continue vexed with the object of it; and before he went, I said the best things in the world, found him

the most agreeable old man in the universe, shook hands with him at parting, and gave him permission to visit me again.

On calm consideration, I do not disapprove of my having allowed him this liberty. Were he merely a good kind of good for nothing gentleman, it would only be losing time to cultivate an acquaintance with him. But as the man is a reprobate, I may find account in enlisting him amongst the other characters; particularly, since I am at present miserably off for villains. Indeed, I augur auspiciously of his intriguing talent, from the fact (which he confessed), of his having discovered my place of abode, by tracing the maid, when she was returning from his house with the bandbox.

But I have to inform you of another rencontre.

Last night, the landlady, Higginson, and myself, went to see his lordship perform in the new Spectacle. The first piece was called a melo-drame ; a composition of horror and drollery, where scenery, dresses, and decorations, answered for nature, genius, and moral. As to the plot, I could make nothing of it ; only that the hero and heroine were in very great trouble about trifles, and quite unconcerned amidst real distress. For instance, when the heroine had arrived at the height of her misery, she sang a song in thunder and lightning. Then the hero, resolving to revenge her wrongs, falls upon one knee, turns up his eyes, and calls on God for assistance. This

invocation to the Divinity, might, perhaps, prove the hero's piety, but I am afraid it shewed the poet's want of any. Certainly, however, it produced a powerful effect on my feelings. I heard the glory of God made subservient to a theatrical clap-trap, and my blood ran cold. So, I fancy, did the blood of six or seven sweet little children behind the scenes, for they were presently sent upon the stage, to warm themselves with a dance. After dancing, came murder, and the hero gracefully staggered forward with a bullet in his head. He falls; and many well-meaning persons suppose that the curtain will fall with him. No such thing: Hector had a funeral, and so must Kemble. Accordingly, the corpse appears, handsomely dished up on an es-

cutcheoned coffin; while certain virgins of the sun (who, I am told, support that character better than their own), chaunt a holy requiem round it. When horror was exhausted, the poet tried disgust.

After this piece came another, full of bannered processions, gilded pillars, paper snows, and living horses, that were far better actors than the men who rode them. It concluded with a grand battle, where twenty soldiers on horseback, and twenty on foot, beat each other indiscriminately, and with the utmost good humour. Armour clashed, sabres struck fire, a castle was burnt to the ground, the horses; fell as dead, the audience rose shouting, and clapping the horses, and a man just below me exclaimed in an ecstasy:—

“ I made their saddles! I made their saddles!”

As to Montmorenci's performance, nothing could equal it; and though his character was the meanest in the piece, he contrived to make it the most prominent. He had an emphasis for every word, an attitude for every emphasis, and a look for every attitude. The people, indeed, hissed him repeatedly, because they knew not, as I did, that his acting a drunken waiter like a de-throned monarch, proceeded from native nobility, not want of talent.

After the performance, we were pressing through the crowd in the lobby, when I saw Stuart (Bob Stuart!) at a distance. Now was my time to lay a foundation for future incident. I therefore separated myself from my

party, like Evelina at the Opera, and contrived to cross his path.

“Miss Wilkinson!” exclaimed he.

“Hush!” whispered I; “conduct me from the Theatre in silence.”

He put my hand under his arm, and hurried me away. When we had gained the street; “Where is your father?” said he. “Have you not seen him since he came to Town?”

“I have not,” answered I; an evasive, yet conscientious declaration, because Wilkinson is not my father.

“How strange!” cried he, “for he left the hotel yesterday to call on you. Oh, Miss Wilkinson, what tempted you to leave home? How are you situated at present? with whom? and what is your object?”

“Alas!” said I, “a horrible mystery hangs over me, which I dare not now

develope. It is enough, that in flying from one misfortune, I have plunged into a thousand others, that peace has fled from my heart, and that I am RUINED."

"Ruined !" exclaimed he, with a look of horror.

"Past redemption," said I, hiding my face in my hands.

"The very first night I came to Town, a gentleman decoyed me into his house, and treated me extremely ill.

"Afterwards I left him, and walked the streets, till I was arrested for a robbery, and put into the watchhouse; and to conclude my short, but eventful tale, a gentleman, a mysterious and amiable youth, met me by mere accident, after my acquittal; and I am, at present, under his protection."

“The villain!” exclaimed Stuart.

“Villain?” said I. “Ah, his large and piercing eye is but the index of a soul fraught with every human virtue. And now, here are my lodgings, and if you will sup with me to-night, you shall see him.”

Stuart gladly consented. We then entered the house; but none of my party had returned. I therefore conducted him into my room, and apprized the maid that he would stay for supper.

“Can nothing,” said he, as we sat down, “induce you to relinquish the mode of life you have adopted?”

“Nothing whatever,” answered I. “It is by far the most exalted that a girl, with the requisite qualifications, could select.”

“What!” cried he, “to form an improper connection with a libertine?”

“There now!” exclaimed I. “There is a pretty insinuation. Ay, this is always the way with us poor heroines. And so, Sir, you presume to say that I have formed an improper connection?”

“Did you not tell me you were ruined?” said he.

“Well,” answered I, “and so I am ruined. Am I not expelled from my paternal home? Am I not deprived of my property? Am I not under sentence of assassination? Is not old Wilkinson, who calls himself my father, working heaven and earth to make me marry you? Ay, you, you,—so no pretended stare, if you please. Ruined? to be sure I am ruined.”

“At least, I rejoice to perceive,”

said he, “that it is your understanding only which is perverted, and that your moral conduct and principles remain undepraved.”

At this moment, the maid beckoned me from the room. I found Montmorenci outside, who begged of me to accompany him up stairs. I went.

“The landlady tells me,” said he, in much agitation, “that you strayed from your party to-night, picked up a young man, and have brought him home to sup with you.”

“’Tis true, my Lord,” answered I.

“And who is the fellow?” cried he.

“Stuart,” said I. “Master Bobby. I find him rather agreeable. An improper education has perverted his understanding, but has not depraved his principles. He says the same of me.

His face improves on acquaintance, and I am sure you will like him."

"Like your grandmother!" cried he, discarding attitude, elegance, every thing. "O the varment, the circumventing villain! Pack him out of the house, pack him out, I say, or by the infernal turnspit, I will lend him such a bother on the side of the head, as shall do his business in no time."

I was thunderstruck. "Sir," said I, "you have agitated the gentle air with the discordance of inelegant oaths and idioms, uttered in the most ungraceful manner. Sir, your vulgarity is unpardonable, and we now part for ever."

"For ever!" exclaimed he, reverting into attitude, and interlacing his knuckles in a clasp of agony. "Hear

me, Cherubina. By the shades of my immortal ancestors, my vulgarity was assumed !”

“ Assumed, Sir ?” said I, “ and pray, for what possible purpose ?”

“ Alas !” cried he, “ I must not, dare not tell. It is a sad story, and enveloped in a mysterious veil. Oh, fatal vow ! Oh, cruel Marchesa !” Shocking were his contortions as he spoke.

“ No !” cried I. “ No vow could ever have produced so dreadful an effect on your language.”

“ Well,” said he, after a painful pause, “ sooner than incur the odium of falsehood, I must disclose to you the horrid secret.

“ The young Count Di Narcissini was my friend. Educated together,

we became competitors in our studies and accomplishments ; and in none of them could either of us be said to excel the other ; till, on our introduction at the Court of Naples, it was remarked by the Queen, that I surpassed the Count in shaking hands. ‘Narcissini,’ said her Majesty, ‘knows well enough when, where, and how, to present a single finger, or perhaps two ; but, for the positive pressure, or the negligent hand half offered with a drooping wrist ; or the cordial, honest, dislocating shake, give me Montmorenci. I cannot deny that the former has great taste in this accomplishment ; but then the latter has more genius—more execution—more, as it were, of the *magnifique* and *aimable*.’

“ His mother the Marchesa over-

heard this charming critique, turned as pale as ashes, and left the levee.

“ That night, hardly had I fallen into one of those gentle slumbers which ever attends the virtuous, when a sudden noise aroused me; and on opening my eyes, I beheld the detested Marchesa, with an Italian assassin, standing over me.

“ Montmorenci!’ cried she, ‘ thou art the bane of my repose. Thou hast surpassed my son in the graces. Now listen. Either pledge thyself, by an irrevocable vow, henceforth to vitiate thy conversation with uncouth phrases, and colloquial barbarisms, or prepare to die!’

“ Terrible alternative! What could I do? The dagger gleamed before my face. I shuddered, and took the fatal vow of vulgarity.

“The Marchesa then put into my hand the Blackguard’s Dictionary, which I studied night and day with much success; and I have now the misfortune to state, that I can be, so far as language goes, the greatest blackguard in England.

“I must add, however, that the Marchesa permitted me to resume my natural elegance, as soon as my marriage should put an end to competition between her son and me.”

“Well,” cried I, “of all the extraordinary, unmeaning, execrable vows ever invented—Oh, I have not common patience with it! Let us change the subject. And now, my Lord, I must insist on entertaining Stuart to-night. Indeed, I will own, that my principal motive in doing so, is to see the difference between a mere gentle-

man, and an actual hero. That you will gain by the comparison, I make no doubt; since I know you will surpass him in majesty of manner, amiable sentiment, and antithetical repartee. You have but a few minutes to prepare for the contest, so pray make the most of them."

His Lordship expostulated again, and swore that Stuart would unheroinize me, and supplant him. However, I rallied this devoted lover out of his jealous fears; then returned to Stuart, and remained with him till supper was announced.

At the introduction, both youths eyed each other earnestly; and as soon as we were seated round the table, his Lordship broke the pause.

"Ah," cried he, "how many thou-

sands of our fellowmen are now sick, naked, and hungry; while we have health, raiment, and a festive board. Ah, how can we repay these blessings but by virtue?"

Stuart stared. Already he began to perceive, that his Lordship's was no common mind.

"Ah," resumed his Lordship, "how sweetly the fineness of this weather attuneth each harmonized soul to unison with virtue!"

"It is indeed a most favourable season for the crops," said Stuart.

I tittered.

"That is precisely what you have said, Sir," cried his Lordship, and winked at me. "But I must trouble you for another observation; as, I fancy, that is not quite original. I dare

say, now, one hundred thousand gentlemen have made it within a week."

"And I dare say," returned Stuart, "that no gentleman, under the circumstances, ever made your last remark before."

"I am a gentleman, however," cried his Lordship.

"Perhaps, Sir," said Stuart, smiling, "that is another original observation."

Montmorenci writhed his remarkable sneer, but was mute.

"Say something pointed," whispered I.

"That I will," returned he. "Pray Sir—talking of original observations—how many legs has a sheep?"

"It has four in a field," answered Stuart. "But (and he measured Mont-

morenci with a most meaning eye) we do not allow it more than two at a table."

"Had the scoundrel answered as he ought," whispered his Lordship to me, "I would have said the wittiest thing in the world!"

So closed the first dialogue; and now the conversation became general, and on the topics of the day. These, Stuart discussed with much ease and animation; while his Lordship remained silent and contemptuous. I fancy his illustrious tongue disdained to trifle.

Meantime Higginson sat Anglicising the Latinity of his face, and aping the postures of Montmorenci; whom the simple man, I verily believe, is already endeavouring to rival.

At length we talked of the Theatre,

and afterwards of acting in general; till his Lordship concluded a long harangue by declaring, that he thought actors the most useful members of the community, because they ridicule human foibles with the best effect.

“ Sir,” said Higginson, as he rubbed the crumbs from the elbow of his new coat, and began an attitude which he was ashamed to finish, “ I must, in all humility, dissent from your exprest proposition, and support the superior claims of the writer.”

“ Observe,” whispered I to his Lordship, “ how the ruling passion betrays itself.”

“ For,” continued the poet, “ inasmuch as the works of the writer live for ever, while the player but ‘ lives and struts his hour,’ it is an indis-

putable sequitur, that the writer must be the more useful member."

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said I, "the most useful members are, not actors who merely mimic, or writers who merely describe, but heroes and heroines, who really perform."

"If you mean the heroes and heroines of romance," said Stuart, "they are useful certainly; but it is in teaching us what we should shun, not what we should imitate. The heroine quits a comfortable home, takes extreme pains to lose her character, and none to recover it; blushes by the chapter; and after weeping tears enough to float her work-basket, weds some captious, passionate, and idle hero."

"Better," cried I, "than remain a domesticated rosy little Miss, who

romps with the squire, plays an old tune upon an old piano, and reads prayers for the good family—servants and all. At last marrying some honest gentleman, who resides on his saddle; she degenerates into a dangler of keys and whipper of children; trots up and down stairs, educates the poultry, and superintends the architecture of pies.”

“Now, for my part,” said Stuart, “I would have a young lady neither a mere homely drudge, nor a heroic skyrocket, let off into the clouds. I would instruct her heart and head, as well as her fingers and feet. She should be at once the ornament of the social group, and the delight of the domestic circle; abroad attractive, at home endearing; the enchantress to whom levity would

apply for mirth, and wisdom for admonition ; and her mirth should be graceful, and her admonition fascinating. When solitary, she should have the power of contemplation, and if her needle broke, she should be capable of finding resource in a book. Finally, she should present a proof, that wit is not inconsistent with good-nature, nor liveliness with good-sense ; and that to make the Virtues be admired and imitated, they ought to be accompanied by the Graces.”

“ So much for the Heroine,” said I. “ Now what is a Hero ?”

“ The first and best of men,” answered he. “ His proper province is to keep the wheels of a Novel going, by misconstruing the motives of his mistress, aspersing her purity, and on

every decent occasion, picking a quarrel with her. He must hunt her from castle to convent, and from convent to cottage. He must watch under her window, in all weathers, without ever taking cold, and he must save her life once at least. Then when he has rescued her from the impending peril, he must bend on one knee, sigh through the amorous gamut, and ask her to marry. If she knows her business, she will refuse him ; upon which, he must act the most heart-rending antics, summon planets, grow pathetically fretful, writhe with grace, and groan in melody. To sum all, if such an animal as a Hero ever existed on earth, he would certainly be something between a monkey and an angel."

" If a Hero ever existed !" cried I.

“ If he ever existed ! *If!*—Well, well, what infatuation ! And so, Sir, your’s is one of those distorted minds, which deny that Heroes ever existed on earth.”

“ It has the misfortune,” said he.

“ Then,” cried I, “ you will probably be somewhat surprised, when you learn,—since you provoke me to it —that so far from there being no Hero on earth, there is one in this very room, at this very moment. Here, Sir, is a Hero ; and let me add, as incontrovertible a Hero as ever breathed a sigh. Nay, notwithstanding the very unpleasant drollery of your countenance, I will condescend so far as to inform you, that he is the actual inheritor ——”

“ Hush !” whispered Montmorenci.

“ Never fear,” said I. “ I will not commit myself. The actual inheritor of a Gothic castle, situated on a beetling rock, and lashed by a certain Italian gulph, which shall be nameless.”

“ Has he told you so ?” asked Stuart.

“ Certainly,” answered I. “ Oh, I have it from the best authority.”

“ Why then, noble unknown,” cried Stuart, “ since Grundy must be but an assumed name, may I beg your real name ?”

“ My name is Norval on the Gram-pian hills !” said his Lordship, with infinite humour.

“ And pray, Sir,” said Stuart, assuming a severe countenance, “ what name does that man deserve, who personates one of those imaginary Heroes, in order to play upon the passions of

an innocent girl, and to make her harmless illusions become the fatal instruments of her destruction?"

Here an unpleasant pause took place, and his Lordship appeared unaccountably agitated.

"What is the matter with you?" whispered I to him. "For shame, my Lord. Never suffer him to bear you down."

"I take it, Sir," cried his Lordship, turning towards Stuart, "I take it—or rather I give it—I give it, Sir, as my decided opinion, that—you are no—Hero!"

"And yet," said I, anxious to assist his Lordship at this crisis, "though Master Bobby is no Hero, I dare be sworn he is a mighty good sort of a man."

“ Oh, a decent, proper-behaved young person, no doubt,” cried his Lordship.

“ An honest bon diable !” cried I.

“ A respectable citizen !” cried he.

“ A loyal subject !” cried I.

“ A humane and pious Christian !” cried he.

This last hit was irresistible, and both of us burst into laughter, while Stuart sat silent, and even affected a smile.

“ Now is your time,” whispered I, to his Lordship. “ Another sarcasm, and your victory is decisive.”

“ I fancy, Master Bobby,” said his Lordship, facing round upon Stuart, and laughing so long, that I thought he would never finish the sentence ; “ I fancy, my tight fellow, you may now knock under !”

“ I am not always inclined to knock under, as you elegantly term it,” answered Stuart; “ neither am I often provoked to knock down.”

“ Knock down whom?” demanded his Lordship, with the most highly-finished frown I had ever beheld.

“ A puppy,” said Stuart coolly.

“ You lie!” vociferated our hero.

“ Leave the room, Sir,” cried Stuart, starting from his seat.

Montmorenci rose, retreated towards the door;—stopped—went on—stopped again—moved—stopped—

“ I tell you what,” said he, “ if you want satisfaction, I am the manner of man that will accommodate you. I am none of your slovenly, slobbering shots. Damme, I scorn to pistol a gentleman about the ankles. I can teach the young idea how to shoot, damme.”

“ Vanish !” cried Stuart, advancing.
His lordship vanished.

I ran, snatched a pen, and wrote on a scrap of paper.

“ VINDICATE YOUR HONOUR, OR
NEVER APPEAR IN MY PRESENCE
AGAIN.”

I then rang the bell, and bade the maid deliver the paper to him.

During half an hour, I remained in a state of the most distracting suspense, for he never returned ! Meantime, Stuart was privately pressing me to leave my lodgings, and remain with one of his relations, till Wilkinson should be found. Indignant at the cowardly conduct of his Lordship, I had almost consented ; when on a sudden, the door flew open, and with a slow step and majestic deportment, Lord Altamont

Mortimer Montmorenci entered. There was a dead silence. He walked towards Stuart, and fell upon one knee before him :

“ I come, Sir,” said he, “ to retract that abuse which I gave you just now. I submit to whatever punishment you please ; nor shall I think my honour re-established, till my fault is repaired. Then grant me the pardon that I beg, on whatever conditions you think proper.”

“ ’Tis granted, my hero,” said Stuart.

“ Hero !” exclaimed I, with an indignation which I could not suppress. “ He a hero ?”

His Lordship instantly snatched a book from his pocket, and opening a passage, presented it to me. The book was *La Nouvelle Heloise*.

“ You see there,” said he, “ how Lord B., after having given St. Preux the lie, as I did Mr. Stuart, begs forgiveness on his kness, and in the precise words which I have just used. Will Cherubina condemn the conduct that Heloise applauded ?”

“ Ever excellent, ever exalted mortal !” cried I. “ O thou art indeed, all that is just, dignified, magnanimous.”

I presented my hand to him ; he bowed over it. And now mirth ruled the night. The landlady laughed ; Montmorenci sang ; Stuart uttered a thousand witticisms ; and even the poet, whom his lordship had amply plied with the grape, determined to be heard ; for, in the midst of our merriment, I saw him, with his mouth open, and his neck stretched forward, ready

to arrest the next moment of silence.
It came.

“ This is the fun,
Equalled by none ;
So never have done !”

cried the uncouth creature, and then protruded such an exorbitant laugh, as made amends for the gravity of his whole life.

“ You are a happy mortal,” said Stuart.

“ So I am happy,” cried he, “ and every thing seems to be happy, for every thing seems to be dancing !”

He spoke, and rolled from his chair. Montmorenci carried him to bed ; Stuart took leave ; and the landlady and I separated to our apartments.

Think of Stuart, that never once

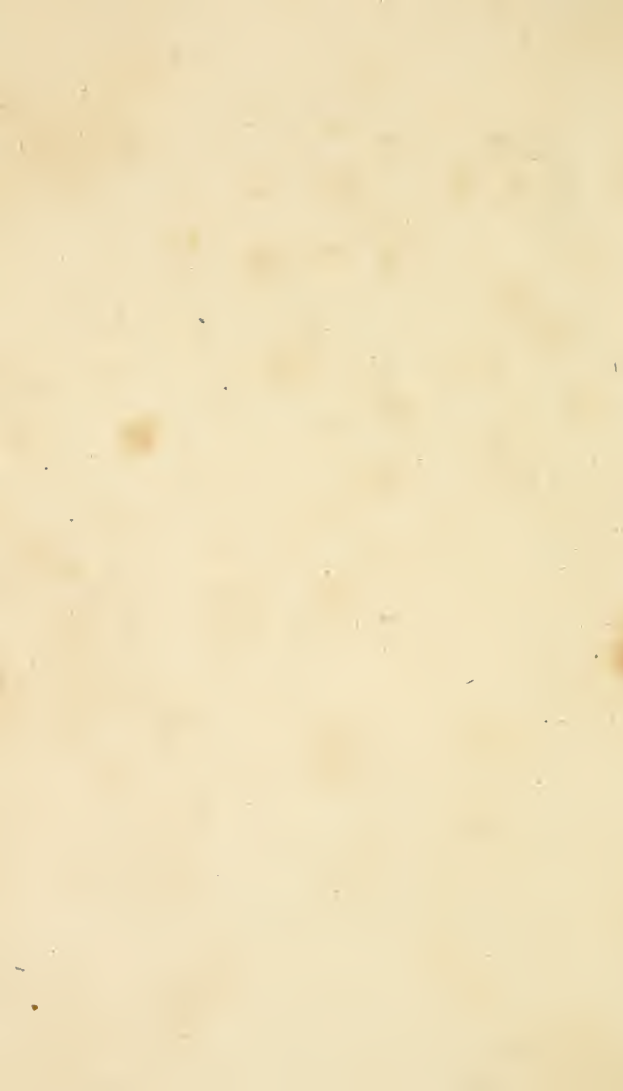
fixed his eyes on me, with a speaking gaze ! Nay, not only is the fellow far from a pathetic turn himself, but he has also an odd talent of detaching even me from my miseries, and of reducing me to horrid hilarity. It would vex a saint to see how he makes me laugh, though I am predetermined not to give him a single smile. But Montmorenci, the sentimental Montmorenci, timely interposes the fine melancholy of his features ;—he looks, he sighs, he speaks ; and in a moment I am recalled to the tender emotions, and to soft complaints of my deplorable destiny.

Adieu.

END OF VOL. I.













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